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AMERICAN PUBLIC OPINION AND U.S. FOREIGN POLICY 1975

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The Chicago Council on Foreign Relations

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Introduction

The survey on which this report is based was conducted in December 1974, shortly after the 94th Congress was elected with an overwhelming Democratic majority in both houses. President Ford had been in office for four months and was beginning to replace many of the officials of the Nixon administration with appointees of his own. The President was beginning to tackle the most severe economic recession that had confronted the country since the Great Depression. The inflation rate for the previous twelve months had averaged over twelve percent, and unemployment figures were rising towards eight percent. Massive layoffs continued in the auto industry in Detroit and related industries around the country. Yet the stock market was just beginning to climb from its ten year low in October 1974, and the Dow-Jones index would soon be moving back up through the 600's.

Both before and since the survey was taken, events were emphasizing the need for a clear view of American attitudes on the U.S. role in the world. Congress was also being forced once again to face the Vietnam question, this time with strong opposition to the Ford administration's effort to obtain additional military assistance for South Vietnam and Cambodia. A series of articles by Seymour Hersh in the *New York Times* in December, alleging illegal domestic operations by the Central Intelligence Agency, provoked a furor. Special Congressional committees were appointed to supplement a special commission headed by Vice President Rockefeller, which the President had appointed to look into the question of the CIA's domestic role. An arms control agreement initiated by President Ford and Soviet Secretary Brezhnev at Vladivostok on November 24, encountered a barrage of Congressional criticism from both left and right. The new Congress promised to take a close look at the direction for U.S. foreign policy, especially with the growing importance of international economic issues that require Congressional action. And the Soviet Union disavowed the trade agreement which it had signed in 1972 because of U.S. Congressional legislation tying Most Favored Nation (MFN) treatment and credits for the Soviet Union to emigration of its minorities.

By the autumn of 1974, Congress had already begun to move to limit the actions of the executive branch of the government in international affairs. The Jackson-Vanik amendment on emigration was only one of several efforts to restrict the administration's actions. Other legislative initiatives also brought Congress into a clash with the administration on aid to Turkey. And there was strong Congressional opposition to the President's action in January when he imposed a tariff on oil imports.

The Secretary of State spent much time at the end of the year preparing to present his view of the proper balance between Congress and the executive branch of the government in the conduct of American foreign policy. Secretary Kissinger detailed his views in an interview in *Business Week*, January 12, 1975: "The attempt to prescribe every detail of policy by Congressional action, can, over a period of time, so stultify flexibility that you have no negotiating room left. We recognize that the Congress must exercise ultimate policy control. But what is meant by that, how much detail is what we intend to discuss very seriously with the Congressional leadership when it reassembles."

A number of Congressional leaders presented alternative views. Senator Lloyd M. Bentsen of Texas accused Secretary Kissinger of following a "dangerously constricted and convoluted" foreign policy with "an undemocratic emphasis on secret diplomacy, personal negotiations and one-man authoritarianism." (February 7, 1975)

As the United States neared the end of the third quarter of the twentieth century, public and leadership support for a foreign policy which committed the United States to a continued and substantial—if reduced—commitment overseas was increasingly being questioned. It remained unclear whether a mood of withdrawal from world responsibility would continue, following the after effects of the long decade of massive military involvement in Vietnam. Meanwhile, economic events in the world moved toward effectively ending the chances for U.S. isolation.

At this time of transition the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations believes it is important to seek and understand the views of the public and national leaders on a series of international questions. In particular, it is important to learn the extent to which the American public and American leaders favor continued United States involvement overseas at a time when this involvement may no longer be identified with military commitment or action, especially in Southeast Asia. To what extent are Americans and their leaders prepared to support continued involvement in the world, though perhaps in a different way than over the past two decades? What role do the public and our leaders want the U.S. to play? How do domestic and foreign policy concerns and priorities relate to one another? How is growing U.S. interdependence with other nations affecting these views? What kinds of sacrifices are the American people prepared to make to support a foreign policy? And who should make foreign policy?

These are some of the questions that need to be answered—and the answers heeded in Washington—if U.S. foreign policy is to regain the confidence and support of the American people.

In November 1974, the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations commissioned Louis Harris & Associates to conduct surveys of both the general public and national leaders, in order to answer these questions.

The public survey involved a stratified systematic national sample of 1,513 respondents, representing Americans aged 18 years and older. In tabulations, cases were weighted so as to eliminate any sampling distortions with respect to age, sex, or race. Field work was conducted between December 6th and December 14th, 1974.

The leadership sample included 328 individuals, representing—as best could be determined—Americans in leadership positions with the greatest influence upon and knowledge about foreign relations. They were drawn, in roughly equal proportions, from the political world, including Senators and Representatives (chiefly members of the Foreign Relations and Foreign Affairs committees); officials of the Department of State, and officials with international responsibilities from other government departments; from the business community (presidents and chairmen, as well as international vice presidents, of major corporations; leaders of business associations); from communications (editors and publishers of major newspapers; wire service executives; television broadcasters); and from education (presidents and chancellors of major universities and foundations; foreign affairs experts). In somewhat lesser numbers they were drawn also from among the leaders of major labor unions, churches, voluntary organizations (fraternal, foreign policy oriented, and other), and ethnic and other politically oriented organizations. The field work was conducted between December 10th and December 29th.

All interviewing, coding and tabulating was conducted through the facilities of the Harris organization under the direction of Carolyn Setlow. The initial design and contents of the questionnaire were prepared by the Harris organization. After being discussed with a number of individuals from the Congress, executive branch, universities and foundations, the questionnaire was revised by the editor, and by Carolyn Setlow, Professor Bernard Cohen of the University of Wisconsin (author of *The Public's Impact on Foreign Policy*, 1973) and Professor Benjamin Page of the University of Chicago (author, with Richard Brody, of "The Impact of Events on Presidential Popularity" in *The Presidency*, forthcoming). In preparing this report we have benefitted greatly from an initial analysis prepared by the Harris organization. The summary analysis and interpretation of the data presented here are the responsibility of the editor.

We have also benefitted from the comprehensive studies published by Potomac Associates e.g. *State of the Nation* 1974, by William Watts and Lloyd Free, and such specialized studies as *World Poverty and Development: A Survey of American Opinion* published by the Overseas Development Council (Paul Laudacina, editor).

We decided to publish our analysis of the data revealed by the national and leadership samples as early as possible in 1975. We believe that the advantages of a brief but timely report outweigh the disadvantages of not being able to prepare a comprehensive and detailed study in such a short period of time. This report should be considered in that light.

The data derived from this study will be placed on deposit with the Survey Research Center in Ann Arbor, Michigan and the Harris Center at Chapel Hill, North Carolina. We wish to express our deep appreciation to the Harris organization, especially Carolyn Setlow, Lou Harris and Kermit Lansner for their tireless efforts and close cooperation working under a tight deadline. Many other friends and colleagues assisted us in the completion of this project. Among those who deserve special mention are John Sullivan of the House Foreign Affairs Committee staff; Charles Bray and Frank Wisner of the U.S. Department of State; Peter Bell of the Ford Foundation; Laura Bornholt of the Lilly Endowment and David Hardin of Market Facts, Inc.

I want to express my deep appreciation to the two principal collaborators who worked on all stages of this project, Professor Bernard Cohen and Professor Benjamin Page.

Special thanks are due to Nora Dell, the Editor and Director of Publications of the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations, who worked with us at every stage of the project, arranged for the design and layout of the report and was responsible for seeing the report through to publication.

I also want to acknowledge a special debt of gratitude to my long time friend and colleague, Robert Hunter, who once again provided invaluable assistance in the analysis, writing and editing of the report. I would also like to thank Norma Newkirk who carried an enormous typing load with professionalism and good humor.

On behalf of the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations, I wish to express our appreciation to the Ford Foundation and the Lilly Endowment for funding the entire project.

John E. Rielly, President
The Chicago Council
on Foreign Relations
February 15, 1975

Summary Findings

A number of important conclusions emerged from the study—some of which were expected, and some of which were not.

DOMESTIC VERSUS FOREIGN POLICY

Not surprisingly, domestic economic difficulties attract far more interest and attention than almost any foreign policy problem. Even so, there is little sentiment among the American public for a retreat from the world—and virtually none among leaders sampled. But there are some inconsistencies in public views.

In general, both samples believe that federal spending on domestic programs should be expanded, and spending on foreign programs reduced. Even where opinion on this matter varies, the highest priorities tend to be assigned to *expanding* domestic programs first and *cutting* foreign and defense programs first.

At this same time, there is a high degree of public understanding about the growing economic interdependence of the United States with the rest of the world: oil and gasoline imports head the list of concrete examples. Still, the belief is more prevalent that the world is dependent on us (particularly for food) than the other way around.

In this era of interdependence, the American public is prepared to make some sacrifices for U.S. cooperation with other countries. This includes high majority support for cutting U.S. gasoline consumption (though not for higher taxes), if this would help developing countries, or if it were needed to aid us or our Allies against an oil embargo. The public is also willing to cut U.S. food consumption (but not accept higher prices) to help poor countries. American leaders are even more willing to see these sacrifices made.

THE UNITED STATES ROLE IN THE WORLD

Two-thirds of the American public shares a great belief that "the United States should play an active role in the world"; 99% of the leaders agree. However, there is widespread disagreement over the specific forms this role should take.

A large majority of the public also believes that real American concerns should be at home, and 52% that we should build up our own defenses and let the rest of the world take care of itself. Leaders are most consistent, with only 26% saying they believe that real concerns should be at home, and only 10% favoring letting the world take care of itself.

The public is fairly evenly divided on whether the United States is as important in the world as it was ten years ago. Leaders strongly believe our importance has slipped. Both groups, meanwhile, support a somewhat more important role for the United States in the future—for reasons of past leadership, economic strength, democratic ideals, and the need for leadership to solve world problems. U.S. leaders are more concerned about each of these factors than is the general public.

Leaders who want the U.S. to play a *less* important role abroad most often cite the relative shift of power to other countries; the public cites domestic political and economic problems.

American public and leadership opinion rates economic strength as the most important aspect of U.S. leadership in the world; leaders place moral values second; skill in negotiating settlements that avoid war third; and scientific progress fourth. The public, by contrast, rank skill at negotiations second, military strength third; moral values fourth;: and science and technology fifth.

For both groups, willingness to make military commitments to other countries and to keep them, ranks below other aspects of U.S. leadership as very important.

At the same time, keeping the peace in the world was the leading U.S. foreign policy goal for both leaders and public, international cooperation was second, promoting U.S. security was third, and worldwide arms control was fourth.

On the preceding list, both groups agree that we are doing best in promoting our own security and keeping the peace in the world second. However, less than a third of public or leadership opinion (28% and 27%, respectively) thinks that agreements with Russia and China mean there is little chance of a world war.

UNITED STATES DEFENSE AND MILITARY INVOLVEMENT

About half of the American public (46%) wants to keep the defense budget where it is; 13% believe that it should be expanded; and 32% believe that it should be reduced. A majority of American leaders (56%), however, wants to cut defense, with only 8% opting for expansion, and 36% for keeping it the same.

However, public opinion is more willing (42%) to cut the defense budget when a choice is suggested between defense and domestic priorities, than when defense is considered on its own (only 32% for cuts). Leaders appear to see defense cuts as a matter of making choices in any event.

More than a third of leaders (34%) cite defense cuts as one of their first or second top priorities for budget reductions while 17% of the public agrees. The public puts greater emphasis on first cutting foreign military aid (35%) and foreign economic aid (24%). Leaders cite military aid 30% of the time as their choice of one or two areas in which to begin cutting, while only 5% of leaders cite economic aid.

U.S. military strength relative to that of the Soviet Union is the most important factor in determining whether public and leadership opinion will favor or oppose defense budget cuts; the effect of defense cuts on unemployment is the next most important factor. When asked, the public is more concerned about the effects of defense cuts on unemployment; leaders are more willing than the public at large to cut spending if it wouldn't mean our falling behind the Soviet Union. It would appear that an adequate economic conversion program would influence public attitudes toward defense cuts.

Both groups think that being strong militarily is very important; but only 36% of each group thinks that making and keeping military commitments to other countries is very important. Two-thirds of the public agrees (33% strongly) that power is what counts in the world, today; but only a bare majority of leaders agree (19% strongly).

This contrast between levels of support for military strength and commitments was also reported in responses to questions about desired U.S. behavior in crisis situations. If friendly countries are attacked, only a quarter of the public (23%) would send aid plus U.S. troops, while a third (34%) of leaders would do so. Only 9% of the public and 1% of leaders would refuse even to send any military or economic aid. These public attitudes vary considerably on the basis of beliefs that Vietnam was either a proud or dark moment in U.S. foreign policy history—45% of the former group favors sending U.S. troops to defend "friendly countries," while only 18% of the latter group would do so.

If specific countries were attacked, a majority of the public (77%) would respond with U.S. troops only in the case of Canada (leaders 90%), while a majority of leaders would also respond with troops to an attack on Western Europe (77% to 39% of the public), or a Soviet takeover of West Berlin (55% to 34% of the public).

If Israel were being defeated by the Arabs, only 27% of the American people would favor sending U.S. troops (50% would oppose it, and 23% are "not sure"). Forty-one percent of leaders would send troops, 44% would oppose it, and 15% are not sure.

If the Arabs cut off the oil supply to Western Europe, only 21% of the American public would favor sending U.S. troops (22% of leaders would do so), and only 14% would respond with troops if Japan's oil were cut off (15% of leaders would do so).

Only 25% of the public would support military action against the Arab oil producers today (although the question was posed in the absence of an embargo or other threat). If the President and Secretary of State asked for public support for such action, only 32% of the public would respond favorably. Similar small increases in support in response to Administration leadership were registered for non-military areas.

Moreover, in the event of a further oil embargo, only 6% of the U.S. public would favor invasion as their first choice of responses (4% among leaders). The public would prefer sharing oil with others (40% to leadership's 83%), or going it alone (38% to leadership's 10%). In general, there is low public support for getting involved in places where war might actually occur, or where U.S. commitments and interests might actually be tested.

In addition to the high order of priority given to cutting foreign military aid by both leaders and public opinion, the survey revealed that only 22% of the public favor any such aid at all. Forty percent of leaders back it, however, and tend to see more value in this aid for our domestic economy, and less damage, than did the general public. Public attitudes for or against military aid largely reflect beliefs about whether or not it promotes U.S. national security.

Foreign military sales are less unpopular than military aid, with 58% of leaders favoring such sales, but only 35% of the public.

In general, more recent American wars are less popular than earlier wars, varying from a high of 68% of the public seeing World War II as a proud moment for America (13%, a dark moment), to a low of only 8% seeing Vietnam in this way (72% a dark moment). Yet less than half the public sampled (42% to 44% against) thought the Vietnam War taught us we shouldn't enter wars we couldn't win (leaders even more firmly rejected this idea as a lesson of Vietnam, by 38% to 55%). About two-thirds of the public learned from Vietnam that we shouldn't support corrupt regimes or get involved in civil wars—while a majority learned that sometimes we have to support regimes we don't like, because a communist takeover would be worse.

Seventy-six percent of the American public see the military as having an important role in making foreign policy (36% see it as very important), compared with 93% who see the Secretary of State as important. Meanwhile, 83% of U.S. leaders see the military's role as being important. A net balance of 8% of the public want that role reduced; while a net balance of 51% of leaders argue for a reduction.

UNITED STATES POLITICAL INVOLVEMENT IN THE WORLD

The great majority of the American people and their leaders (66% and 99%, respectively) accept a positive role for the United States in the rest of the world. Also, fully 82% of the public and 95% of the leaders believe that some problems (like food, energy, and inflation) are so big that no country can solve them alone, and that they can be solved only through international cooperation. Half of the public and more than 80% of leaders think we should consult with allies before making major foreign policy decisions.

The American people are ambivalent about international organizations, however. An overwhelming majority (82%) saw the U.S. role in founding the United Nations as a proud moment in our history, but only a bare majority (53%) think it is very important for the U.S. to be a world leader in international organizations such as the U.N. Three-fifths of the public think that the superpowers are more important than the U.N. in keeping other countries from going to war; however, a similar number think we should conduct more of our foreign policy through international institutions.

Nearly three-quarters of the public thinks that having good relations with Western Europe, Japan, and the Soviet Union is very important; 68% with the Arab countries; 63% with Asia; 62%

with Latin America; and 56% with Africa. Leadership opinion places greater weight on good relations with each area or country, except for Asia and Africa.

Hostility towards some of the communist countries, where stable relationships have been created, has gone down. For example, 58% of the public believes that the U.S. and U.S.S.R. can reach agreements to keep peace, and there is favorable support—between 60% and 84%—for nine specific areas of possible superpower agreements (leadership support was much higher). Fifty-three percent of Americans favor full diplomatic relations with Cuba (84% of leaders favor it). Fifty-five percent of Americans believe we can reach long-term agreements with China to keep the peace (76% of leaders believe this).

However, about half (46%) of both samples believe that more countries are likely to become communist in the next decade, and there is widespread belief that in certain cases this would pose a threat to the United States, ranging downward from Western European countries (public opinion: 71%); Latin American countries (69%), Japan (67%), and African countries (51%). Leaders see lower threats in each case, with only 54% worrying about Latin American countries, and 30% in the case of African countries. About half the public believes that communist governments in Italy and Portugal would be a threat to the U.S. (50% Italy, 47% Portugal)—though fewer leaders believe so.

Two-thirds of the American public (and seven-eighths of leaders) believe that the U.S. should put pressure on countries which systematically violate basic human rights. Three quarters of both samples believe it is morally wrong to back military dictatorships that deny basic rights, even if we can have military bases in those countries. A majority (57%) of leaders think we should do more to oppose apartheid in South Africa; but only a third of the public thinks this way.

Nearly two-thirds of leaders disagree that "how the Soviet Union handles the treatment of the Jews or other minority groups is a matter of internal Soviet politics, and none of our business," nearly half the public (48%) share this view. Yet almost all leaders (97%) want to expand trade with the Soviet Union; and two-thirds of the public want to do so as well.

UNITED STATES ECONOMIC INVOLVEMENT IN THE WORLD

Almost every major economic problem—inflation, recession, and resources—ranks ahead of traditional foreign policy concerns in public and leadership attitudes. There is a preference to use U.S. economic resources at home; but a compensating desire exists to use foreign policy to benefit U.S. and foreign economies.

There is also high awareness of the impact of foreign affairs on the U.S. economy. Eighty-seven percent of the public believes foreign policy has a major impact on the price of gasoline at home; 78% on the value of the dollar abroad; 77% on the overall U.S. economy; and majorities on the sale of U.S. goods abroad (69%), supplies of raw materials for manufacturing (64%), the price of manufactured products (63%), and unemployment rates (59%). U.S. leaders are largely in agreement. Thus the traditional dividing line between foreign and domestic issues has become blurred.

Public attitudes toward involvement in the international economy significantly reflect concern with domestic economic difficulties. Most important, a large majority of the American public (80%) favors cooperation with other consumer states to reduce dependence on outside supplies of energy. This was so even if gasoline consumption had to be reduced and tax dollars spent. Leaders (97%) overwhelmingly support such cooperation.

A large majority (83%) of the American public favors joint cooperation with the Soviet Union to help solve the world energy shortage. But a plurality of the public (39%) opposes easy-term loans to developing countries to meet balance of payments deficits caused by rising oil costs (72% of leaders favor such loans).

The American public also favors unilateral action on resources. Eighty-seven percent favor spending tax money to develop new energy sources; 78% are willing to cut gasoline consumption by 10%; 75% to go without meat one day a week, in order to export food abroad to combat shortages; 68% to cut out nonessential uses of fertilizer; 59% to accept gasoline rationing; but only 30% to accept a gasoline tax of 25¢ a gallon.

The American public does not see itself as highly responsive to Presidential leadership on these issues. If the President and Secretary of State asked, public support would rise by only 8% or less for going without meat one day a week, spending tax dollars on energy resources, cutting back gasoline consumption, accepting a gasoline tax rise, and accepting a 10% rise in the price of food.

About half the American public (52%) support the principle of foreign economic aid, but 56% also wants the level cut back; only 10% wants it increased. Earlier aid efforts are widely regarded as proud moments in U.S. history. Cuts are particularly favored when seen in the context of competing domestic priorities. Humanitarian and emergency aid, however, are strongly supported.

College graduates and U.S. leaders favor economic aid more than the general public, although there is strong popular support for raising the standard of living in other countries. There is more public support for economic aid when it is clear that it actually helps people in poor countries.

Attitudes towards foreign economic aid are highly related to its impact on the U.S. economy, with 25% of the public thinking it helps our economy, and 63% that it hurts. Foreign economic aid is seen to help other economies (77% of public opinion agrees), it is seen to help others live better (70%), and it is seen to help the national security of other countries (65%); but these aims do not have high public priority. The principal opposition to foreign economic aid is based on doubts that it helps our national security or our domestic economy.

WHO MAKES U.S. FOREIGN POLICY?

Public opinion judges Secretary of State Kissinger and television news highest as very reliable sources of information on U.S. foreign policy. Leadership opinion agrees on the Secretary of State, rates newspapers and private foreign policy organizations next, and gives a low rating to television news.

No more than 31% of the public sampled follow any foreign news event very closely, and the highest rating in the December 1974 sample tended to go to events then in prominence. On average, only about 20% of the public follows foreign policy issues very closely.

The American public overwhelmingly believes that the Secretary of State plays the dominant role in U.S. foreign policy. Seventy-three percent (97% of leaders) see his role as very important, compared to only 49% of the public (51% of leaders) who judge the President's role in that way.

In contrast, 39% of public opinion sees the role of Congress as being very important (18% of leadership opinion agrees); while the role of public opinion is itself rated at a mere 19% (15% rating by leaders). The discrepancy in popular and leadership opinion about the role of Congress was also reflected in estimates of the role of business: 42% of the public sees the role of business as very important, but only 25% of leaders do. The CIA (in a sample taken after the disclosures about Chile but before those on domestic activities) was rated as very important in U.S. foreign policy by only 18% of leaders, and 28% of the general public.

In terms of working for peace in the world, President Ford receives a 50% popular rating of excellent or pretty good and 52% from leaders; while Congress' rating is 42% from the public and 32% from leaders. Comparing the two, only 10% of leaders and public opinion think that Congress is playing too strong a role, while 38% of the public and 51% of leaders think that its role is too weak.

On doing his job, the Secretary of State receives a positive rating from 85% of leaders, and 75% of the general public. A majority of both samples are also inclined to give him latitude in personal diplomacy, although there is strong sentiment for greater public and Congressional influence on the shape and conduct of foreign affairs.

I. The Priority Of Foreign Policy

A national survey on one specialized area will tend to exaggerate the area's significance in the everyday lives of ordinary people. By posing a long list of questions on a single subject, the survey can make it appear that the subject at issue is uppermost in the public mind. It is important, therefore, to begin by introducing some perspective. This national sample represents the adult population of the United States, with all its rich diversity—cultural, educational, social, economic, professional, religious and residential. But to what extent are the respondents in this sample interested in *any* horizons other than the immediate ones that surround their private lives? What hold does foreign policy have on their minds? What priority does it have in their view of public and private concerns? And how does the public differ from the sample of leaders chosen because of the latter's more active role in shaping the course of the nation?

We can begin to answer these questions by posing a further one: How interested is the American public in news about various subjects and events? Local and national news predictably are at the top: 56% of the public describe themselves as "very interested" in both. News about other countries comes in last, with 35% "very interested," and 20% "hardly interested at all." Nearly half (49%) report themselves as "very interested in news about the relations of the U.S. with other countries—slightly more than the 47% who are very interested in state level news.

These statements on interest in news about U.S. foreign relations probably cannot be taken at face value, however, because individuals tend to over report the amount of interest they have in subjects that are of apparent interest to interviewers. Indeed, when the public sample was asked how closely they had followed news about eleven different and specific foreign policy events, a rather different picture emerged.

TABLE I-1. How closely would you say you personally have followed news about the following events—The Public

	Very Closely %	Somewhat Closely %	Not Very Closely %	Not Sure %
The World Food Conference	31	32	35	2
Problems in the Middle East	29	39	31	1
Kissinger's trip to China	28	39	32	1
Arafat's visit to the U.N.	20	28	48	3
Discussion about the U.S. recognizing Cuba	18	36	44	1
Ford-Brezhnev summit meeting	17	33	48	2
Congressional debates on foreign defense spending	16	36	47	2
The war in Cyprus	15	34	49	2
Congressional debates on foreign aid	14	36	49	1
What's happening in Vietnam these days	14	34	50	2
Elections in Great Britain	6	20	72	2

It is important to note that no item on this list was followed "very closely" by even one-third of the public. Only four items were followed "very closely" by one-fifth or more. Nearly one-half of the public acknowledged that they had not followed seven out of the eleven issues very closely at all.

Limited interest in foreign policy questions is also reflected in the proportion of "not sure" answers to specific questions that require more than an intuitive or "gut" response. In the survey of the general public, the "not sures" were generally in the 10% range, and often went to the 25-35% range; but for the sample of leaders, the proportion of "not sures" was approximately half that for the general public.

Next, there is the question of the *relative* value attached to foreign policy issues. In one sense, the priority that Americans accord to foreign policy is low: domestic economic issues take strong precedence among the American people and its leadership over the familiar issues of external relations that have pre-occupied the U.S. for the past generation. But in another sense, the priority of foreign policy is high, ɪf we talk about *new* issues of external relations. For example, the course of domestic economic policy and welfare is widely seen as highly interdependent with events taking place in the rest of the world. Let us look at this phenomenon in more detail.

One of the clearest findings in this survey is the predominance of domestic economic questions over other public policy issues. When the survey was conducted, the annual rate of inflation was running over 12%, and unemployment was near 8%. At that time, both public and leaders expressed most concern about the problem of inflation, while leaders also ranked recession and the energy crisis high on the agenda for federal government action; public opinion is less concerned with recession, and even less with energy. Traditional foreign policy questions ranked rather low on the agenda for federal government action by both public and leaders, as the following table makes clear.

TABLE I-2. The two or three biggest problems facing the country today that you would like to see the federal government do something about.

	Public %	Leaders %
ECONOMY	80	85
Inflation, high prices, high cost of living	56	54
Recession, unemployment	28	41
The economy	13	30
High cost of food, groceries	12	1
High interest rates	1	*
ENERGY CRISIS, OIL SHORTAGES	11	45
Energy crisis, fuel shortage	10	42
Problems with oil-producing countries, Arabs; too dependent on them for oil	1	4
FOREIGN POLICY	13	23
Should stop supporting other countries with foreign aid; should take care of this country's needs	8	2
U.S. foreign policy	3	7
World peace, disarmament	2	6
Too many imports; should use American products	1	*
Devaluation of the dollar	1	1
Middle East situation	1	8
INTERNATIONAL ECONOMY; WORLD ECONOMY	—	8
GOVERNMENT CORRUPTION; REORGANIZATION	15	17
Corruption, dishonesty in government	10	10
Government should be overhauled, revamped	4	5
Country disorganized, in a mess	1	3
Salaries of public officials too high	1	1

*less than 0.5%

The public also places a higher emphasis on those foreign policy issues that have implications for the domestic economy. When asked to name the two or three biggest *foreign policy* problems facing the United States—ripe for federal action—the public placed foreign aid at the top of the list (33%). And the chief reasons given for opposing it —in answer to this free response question—were the need to "stop supporting the rest of the world" and to "take care of our needs first." Next in importance was the oil shortage and related issues (25%), and the Middle East (14%) —though this issue, too, is related to the U.S. economy (oil). Only after these issues did "keeping the peace," "cooperating with other nations," and "avoiding war" appear (13%), followed by concern for our balance of trade (10%).

Leaders responded somewhat differently, perhaps reflecting a higher interest in foreign issues in their own right. The Middle East topped the list (43%), followed closely by oil (41%), then the arms race (28%), world hunger (18%), interdependence and cooperation (16%), balance of trade (15%), Western Alliances (14%), and *detente* with the Soviet Union and China (12%).

This tendency on the part of public opinion to show greater concern for domestic issues is borne out by attitudes towards increasing or cutting federal spending, when a choice is implied between competing programs. The following table illustrates this point.

There is majority public support for greater spending on health, education, housing, and pollution control; leaders concur, though in a slightly different order. Meanwhile, the four areas of highest public support for *cut backs* are military aid, economic aid, defense spending, and CIA covert operations; leaders have a somewhat different list: farm subsidies, military aid, CIA covert operations, defense spending, and highway expenditures.

In terms of priorities for expanding/cutting back, public opinion would expand six domestic programs before any foreign one; leaders would expand five domestic programs first. On priorities for cutting back, the public names four foreign programs before reaching welfare; and leaders name three before reaching farm subsidies.

Yet despite these observations about the relative importance of domestic issues for the American people—and low public interest in the rest of the world—there is still strong support for a category of issues that reflect growing American interdependence with the rest of the world. For example, both leadership and public opinion strongly support the view that U.S. relations with other countries have a major impact on virtually every aspect of the economy at home, from prices for food and gasoline, to rates of unemployment.

There is also a significant sense of U.S. dependence on the rest of the world for the strength of our domestic economy. For example, 71% of public opinion believes that the U.S. depends "a lot" on the rest of the world for gasoline and oil; 41% for markets for manufactured products; and 30% as a source of raw materials for manufacture.

At the same time, the American public sees the rest of the world as being more dependent on us than the other way around—which should be expected, in view of past U.S. economic relations with the rest of the world. Ac-

TABLE I-3. Here is a list of present federal government programs. For each, tell whether you feel it should be expanded, cut back or kept about the same.

PUBLIC	Expand %	Cut Back %	Keep Same %	Not Sure %
1. Aid to education	58	8	30	4
2. Health insurance	58	7	27	8
3. Housing	56	10	27	6
4. Pollution control	50	12	33	5
5. Farm subsidies	30	28	27	16
6. Welfare and relief programs at home	30	34	30	6
7. Highway expenditures	22	21	51	6
8. U.S. information programs abroad	17	23	37	23
9. Defense spending	14	42	38	6
10. General information gathering activities of the CIA	11	29	34	26
11. Economic aid to other nations	10	56	28	7
12. Secret political operations of the CIA	8	39	27	26
13. Military aid to other nations	3	70	20	7
LEADERS				
1. Housing	76	6	16	2
2. Health insurance	73	5	18	3
3. Aid to education	60	6	32	2
4. Pollution control	53	14	31	2
5. Economic aid to other nations	42	20	36	2
6. Welfare and relief programs at home	41	20	34	5
7. U.S. information programs abroad	21	25	49	5
8. Defense spending	10	56	33	1
9. Highway expenditures	7	56	35	1
10. General information gathering activities of the CIA	7	25	59	9
11. Farm subsidies	6	74	16	5
12. Secret political operations of CIA	2	66	23	9
13. Military aid to other nations	2	73	20	5

cording to the public sample, the rest of the world depends "a lot" on the United States for food supplies (84%); industrial know-how (77%); investment capital (76%); markets for manufactured products (73%); technological equipment (72%); and manufactured products (67%).

This growing sense of interdependence was reflected throughout the survey in answer to specific questions about actions the United States should take in relation to the rest of the world—as will be seen in later chapters. It is significant, however, that there was a greater awareness of, and support for, interdependence in the economic field, as opposed to those of military or security affairs. This trend of thinking parallels the growth of new economic security problems, coincident with the decline of military concerns deriving from the Second World War and its aftermath.

Thus if we redefine the idea of "foreign affairs" to reflect the shift in the nature of significant issues, then American public opinion is aware of the rest of the world, and also prepared to act based on that awareness.

But how does a growing sense of interdependence with the rest of the world translate into specific attitudes and actions? As later chapters indicate, there are many ambiguities and possible contradictions in attitudes, especially among the general public. There is also a significant disparity between leadership and public opinion on a number of issues, especially where there is a different level of interest or access to information. But the general proposition is still a valid one: that deepening U.S. domestic economic problems are stimulating greater public and leadership awareness of the limits to American independence from the rest of the world.

II. Foreign Policy Goals and Performance

How do American People and their leaders view the role of the United States in the world today? What should this role be in the future? What goals are deemed most important? And how well is the nation doing in reaching these goals?

INVOLVEMENT, NOT ISOLATION

Despite pronounced concern with domestic matters, the American public does not, by any means, advocate a withdrawal from world affairs. To be sure, a majority of the public sampled agree strongly with the statement that "America's real concerns should be at home, not abroad"; but a majority also agree that "the United States has a real responsibility to take a very active role in the world." There is also substantial sentiment that "we should build up our own defenses and let the rest of the world take care of itself"—but a majority disagree with the proposition that "the U.S. is rich and powerful enough to go it alone, without getting involved in the problems of the rest of the world." In sum, a substantial majority of the public (66%) feel that we should "take an active part" in world affairs, rather than "stay out." This figure has changed little in nearly 30 years.

Indeed, when asked what future role the U.S. should play in the world, a majority of the public (62%) responds that ten years from now we should play at least as important and powerful role as today. Far more want the United States to play a more important role, than want it to play a less important one.

At the same time, the public is often reluctant to invest money, effort, or manpower to support actions implied by an active U.S. role in the world. Should resources be put to domestic or foreign use? Most people want the effort to be made at home. On the basis of survey data, therefore, U.S. public opinion seems to define a U.S. role in the world as follows: peacekeeping through skillful negotiations and international cooperation—actions which hopefully ~~will be~~ effective, but also inexpensive.

Not surprisingly, U.S. leaders express even more support for an active foreign policy role for the United States. Fully 99% think it best for the future of the country for us to take an active part in world affairs, rather than stay out; 90% agree that the United States has a real responsibility to take a very active role; and few agree with isolationist sentiments, going it alone, or letting the rest of the world take care of itself. Many leaders (39%) want the U.S. to play a more important and powerful role ten years from now, whereas few (15%) favor a less important U.S. role.

It was also true of leaders that commitment to an active U.S. role in the world did not extend to many concrete steps involving the use of American money or manpower abroad. Leaders sampled, too, hope to promote American influence without great cost.

THE AIMS OF FOREIGN POLICY

Without question, the major foreign policy goals for the public are to keep peace in the world and to promote and defend U.S. security. Large majorities—85% and 83%, respectively—cite peacekeeping as *the* most important goal among the 18 listed. The leaders sampled agree, with even more emphasis: 95% and 91% cited peacekeeping and national security as "very important" goals; and a full 55% name peacekeeping as most important of all.

After security, the general public places foreign economic aims next in importance for the United States. Seventy-five percent of public opinion rates the securing of adequate energy supplies as "very important"; while 74% places the protecting of American workers' jobs in this category. Other economic goals are also rated as very important: these included fostering international cooperation to solve food, inflation and energy problems; helping to solve world inflation; and combatting world hunger. Leaders generally agree, although they tend to attach considerable less importance to protecting American jobs.

There is a tendency for goals that would directly help Americans—whether in terms of physical security or standard of living—to take precedence over goals involving the fate of other countries, such as protecting weaker

TABLE II-1. Whether it will be best for the future of the country if we take an active part in world affairs—The Public

	Better If We Take an Active Part in World Affairs	Better If We Stay Out of World Affairs	Not Sure
1974	66%	24%	10%
1955	72	21	7
1947	68	25	7

NOTE: Trend data from 1947 and 1955 come from national surveys conducted by NORC in Chicago. Responses from eight intervening surveys fall within this same range.

TABLE II-2. Importance of foreign policy goals for the United States—The Public

	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important At All	Not Sure	Most Important
1. Keeping peace in the world	85%	11%	2%	2%	35%
2. Promoting and defending our own security	83	12	2	2	9
3. Securing adequate supplies of energy	75	18	2	5	3
4. Protecting the jobs of American workers	74	17	5	4	6
5. Fostering international cooperation to solve common problems, such as food, inflation and energy	67	24	3	6	14
6. Worldwide arms control	64	24	5	7	2
7. Helping solve world inflation	64	27	4	5	5
8. Combatting world hunger	61	31	5	3	5
9. Containing communism	54	27	13	6	7
10. Maintaining a balance of power among nations	48	34	8	10	2
11. Strengthening the United Nations	46	32	14	8	1
12. Helping to improve the standard of living in less developed countries	39	47	9	5	3
13. Protecting the interest of American business abroad	39	42	13	6	—
14. Strengthening countries who are friendly toward us	37	49	8	6	—
15. Defending our allies' security	33	50	9	8	—
16. Protecting weaker nations against foreign aggression	28	42	22	8	—
17. Helping to bring a democratic form of government to other nations	28	53	11	8	—
18. Promoting the development of capitalism abroad	16	40	30	14	—
None					1
Not sure					7

TABLE II-3. Importance of foreign policy goals for the United States—Leaders

	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important At All	Not Sure	Most Important
1. Keeping peace in the world	95%	4%	—	1%	55%
2. Promoting and defending our own security	91	7	1%	1	10
3. World wide arms control	86	12	1	1	4
4. Fostering international cooperation to solve common problems, such as food, inflation and energy	86	12	1	1	16
5. Helping solve world inflation	81	16	2	1	1
6. Securing adequate supplies of energy	77	21	1	1	2
7. Combatting world hunger	76	22	1	1	2
8. Helping to improve the standard of living in less developed countries	62	36	1	1	3
9. Maintaining a balance of power among nations	56	34	8	2	2
10. Defending our allies' security	47	49	2	2	—
11. Protecting the jobs of American workers	34	53	12	1	—
12. Containing communism	34	49	16	1	2
13. Strengthening the United Nations	31	44	24	1	—
14. Strengthening countries who are friendly toward us	28	66	5	1	—

TABLE II-3. Importance of foreign policy goals for the United States—Leaders

	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important At All	Not Sure	Most Important
15. Protecting weaker nations against foreign aggression	26	66	6	2	—
16. Protecting the interests of American business abroad	17	64	18	1	1
17. Helping to bring a democratic form of government to other nations	13	55	30	2	—
18. Promoting the development of capitalism abroad	9	44	45	2	—

nations against aggression, defending allies, security, or helping to improve the standard of living in less developed countries.

Perhaps most striking, however, traditional Cold War aims no longer seemed to have as much appeal either for public or leadership opinion. Containing communism is cited as very important by a majority of the public (54%—however, it ranks ninth in priority); and by a still smaller fraction of leaders (34%); strengthening countries friendly toward us is considered very important only by 37% of the public. Protecting the interests of American business abroad is very important to only 39% of the public and to 17% of the leaders. Both groups put at the bottom of the list the exportation of the American way of life in terms either of bringing a democratic form of government to other nations, or of promoting the development of capitalism abroad.

On balance, the selection of goals seems to indicate partly a turning inward and partly a tempering of American messianism. Many see foreign policy more as a tool to serve certain particular U.S. interests—and are turning away from conflict with communism abroad as a preeminent foreign policy goal.

This conclusion is also evident in views of the importance for the United States to be a world leader in various respects. The public strongly endorses capabilities for peacekeeping—especially skill in negotiating settlements that avoid war (and, to a lesser extent, military strength)—as "very important" areas for U.S. world leadership. On the economic front, public opinion cites economic strength as the most important area for U.S. leadership more often than any other area. Scientific and technological progress, and standard of living, are also rated as important areas for U.S. leadership.

U.S leaders largely agree that economic and peacekeeping capabilities are chief areas for American leadership. However, their attitudes differ from public opinion in assigning very great importance to leadership in moral values. About one quarter (23%) of the leaders cite moral values as the most important of all.

ASSESSMENTS OF PAST PERFORMANCE

How does public and leadership opinion assess American success in achieving foreign policy goals? The public sampled gave mixed reviews. While many overall ratings could be labelled "positive," the number of "excellent" ratings was very small: never more than 16% for any one of the 18 goals sampled, and more often around 6%. Public opinion, in short, is generally unimpressed with American foreign policy performance. Leaders are even less approving.

However, this discontent with U.S. efforts does not center on achievements in keeping peace in the world, in promoting and defending our own security (or, to a lesser extent, in securing world-wide arms control). In these areas, pub-

TABLE II-4. Positive ratings of job U.S. is doing in achieving foreign policy goals

	Public %	Leaders %
Promoting and defending our own security	71	85
Defending our allies' security	66	78
Keeping peace in the world	60	73
Strengthening countries who are friendly toward us	58	57
Helping to improve the standard of living in less developed countries	56	26
Maintaining a balance of power among nations	54	74
Containing communism	54	64
World-wide arms control	53	37
Protecting weaker nations against foreign aggression	53	59
Protecting the interests of American business abroad	52	53
Promoting the development of capitalism abroad	52	32
Strengthening the United Nations	47	18
Fostering international cooperation to solve common problems, such as food, inflation and energy	44	33
Combatting world hunger	[illegible]	20
Helping to bring a democratic form of government to other nations	40	14
Securing adequate supplies of energy	[illegible]	[illegible]
Protecting the jobs of American workers	[illegible]	[illegible]
Helping solve world inflation	[illegible]	[illegible]

lic opinion feels we were doing at least "a pretty good" job. (Leaders agree even more strongly except on arms control.)

The bulk of public unhappiness centers on a belief in failure to attain U.S. *economic* objectives. Only 24% of the public, for example, thinks that the U.S. is currently doing a pretty good (or excellent) job at helping to solve world inflation; fully 35% rated the results as "poor." Only a minority thinks the U.S. is doing a good job at fostering international cooperation to solve such problems as food, inflation, and energy. A majority thinks that the U.S. is doing only a fair—or poor—job at securing adequate supplies of energy. And in a matter of particular concern to the public—protecting American jobs—only 35% thinks the U.S. is doing well; 58% rates the effort only fair or poor.

On all of these economic matters, leaders also give negative ratings, and in fact, were more likely to give ratings of "poor." Thirty-two percent of leaders rate U.S. performance as poor on securing adequate supplies of energy, and a full 55% give a poor rating on helping to solve world-wide inflation.

On some goals of lesser concern, too —such as combatting world hunger, and improving the standard of living in less developed countries—there are substantial negative ratings, especially by leaders.

Some other findings in the study—such as the positive evaluations of the Secretary of State—suggest that only part of public discontent has so far led to blaming particular foreign policy leaders. Yet the discontent is real, indicating a popular desire for greater achievements in reaching specific goals.

III. Attitudes Toward U.S. Military Involvement

During the past several years, there has been a substantial change in U.S. military policy. The Vietnam War is over for the United States; there is *detente* with the Russians; there is a limited rapprochment with China; the draft has come to an end; and economic factors demand far more attention than during the Cold War—in part because of the Cold War's end.

It is not unreasonable, therefore, to expect major changes in public attiudes towards the role of U.S. military involvement in the world, and at the same time, toward the size and composition of the defense budget.

THE DEFENSE BUDGET

What do the American public and leaders feel about the place that the defense budget should play in our society? Is the defense budget too large? The right size? Or too small?

Direct questions in the survey on this subject elicited the following response among the public sampled: 13% think the defense budget should be expanded, 47% feel that it should be kept about the same, and 32% feel that it should be reduced. But there is an important disparity on this question between leadership and public opinion, with leaders favoring a *reduced* military effort by a much higher percentage: only 8% feel the budget should be expanded, 36% feel it should be kept the same, while 56% feel it should be cut back.

Further, 34% of leaders put defense spending on a list of the first one or two federal programs that should be cut back; while 17% of public opinion express this preference for priority defense reductions. (This latter figure is still significant, however, since only foreign economic and military aid cuts receive a higher priority in public opinion.)

TABLE III-1. Defense spending

	Public			Leaders		
	Spend More	Spend Same	Spend Less	Spend More	Spend Same	Spend Less
Defense on its own	13%	47%	32%	8%	36%	56%
Defense in the context of other spending	14	38	42	10	33	56

What explains the general difference in view on the importance of defense cuts? The answer is partly economic: to begin with, the perceived relationship between defense spending and unemployment. When asked if they favored cutbacks—if that would mean increasing unemployment—46% of the public originally favoring a cutback changed their minds, while only 20% of the leaders originally favoring a cutback followed suit.

When the opposite question—assuming *no* unemployment from a defense budget cut—was asked of people who originally favored expanding the defense budget or keeping it the same, then 21% of the public respondents changed their minds, while only a tiny 4% of leaders did so.

Thus it appears that the issue of unemployment does not play a decisive role in leaders' views of the size of the defense budget, while the unemployment factor plays an important role in public attitudes (when a link between defense cutbacks and a loss of jobs is explicitly made). It may be that most leaders are aware of this link and took it into account in their initial answers.

There is also a difference between leadership and public opinion on a further economic aspect of defense spending. This becomes clear on comparing responses to the above question ("should we expand/cut back our spending on national defense?") with responses to a similar question, asking which items on a list of federal programs, *including* defense spending, should be expanded or cut back.

In the second question, the trade-offs were implied, though not made explicit. Yet few leaders changed their minds; while the public significantly favored spending less on defense when the full spectrum of alternative uses of federal revenues was presented.

Both groups of respondents were also questioned on the relationship between defense spending and American military strength, relative to that of the Soviet Union. Fifty-nine percent of the public who had favored cutting back the defense budget changed their minds when this would entail our military strength falling behind that of the Soviet Union. Fifty-seven percent of the leaders originally favoring cutbacks also changed their minds.

At the same time, 40% of the public respondents who had favored expanding the defense budget or keeping it the same changed their minds when the contingency was presented that this would *not* mean that our military strength would fall behind that of the Soviet Union. Among the comparable group of leaders, fully 66% changed their minds.

Thus it appears that, concerning attitudes on the defense budget, the issue of U.S. military strength in comparison to that of the Soviet Union is a more potent factor for both leaders and public opinion than is the issue of unemployment. However, leaders sampled were less concerned than the general public about problems of unemployment—or else they were unconvinced that unemployment would result from defense cuts. Furthermore, leaders are more willing than the general public to cut defense if this would not mean our falling behind the Russians. Both groups seem to be willing to exploit a real spirit of *detente* but with greater confidence in it on the part of leadership.

U.S. MILITARY STRENGTH

Closely related to the question of United States prestige and relative military strength are attitudes about the importance of leadership in various fields.

Both public opinion and the leaders sampled place a high value on the United States' being a leading military power in the world. Sixty-nine percent of the public, and 73% of leaders, feel that it is "very important" for the United States to be a world leader in military strength. By contrast, only 36% of each sample think it "very important" for us to be a world leader in "willingness to make military commitments to other countries and to keep them," (at least "somewhat important" leaders. 84%, public 75%).

These data may not reflect a move towards isolationism—but they do seem to mean a move towards earlier views of U.S. self-reliance rather than a far-flung set of commitments. The public and the leaders diverge widely on this, however; when they are confronted with a direct question: 26% of the public and 85% of the leaders strongly disagree with the proposition that "The United States is rich and powerful enough to go it alone, without getting involved in the problems of the rest of the world."

Yet there is less divergence of views between leaders and public opinion on a related issue: "when a country feels that what it believes in is right . . . having the power to get what you want is what really counts, today." Among public opinion, 66% agree with this proposition (33% strongly) and 27% do not; while among leaders, 55% agree (19% strongly) and 43% disagree.

This strand of "realpolitik" is even more strongly in evidence in responses to the following statement: "The only way peace can exist in this world is when a country like the United States who wants peace is strong enough to back up warnings to possible aggressor nations that they can't get away with aggression." This does not imply actual military involvement, but rather the strength to deter. Here, there is a remarkably similar response by both samples, with public opinion agreeing by 74% for (43% strongly) and 15% against; and with leaders agreeing by 77% for (40% strongly) to 20% against.

U.S. MILITARY COMMITMENTS ABROAD—IN GENERAL

How do the American people and their leaders view U.S. military involvement overseas? It has been noted that only a modest 36% of public opinion and leaders sampled rate a willingness to make military commitments to other countries and to keep them as being "very important." But what should the United States do "if friendly countries are attacked"?

This table, coupled with earlier data, indicates that the general public seem to combine support for a strong defense with a decided reluctance actually to get involved in combat, or in steps that could lead to combat—perhaps as an extension of aid commitments. Leadership opinion, meanwhile, is more internally consistent: the degree of its support for a strong defense is more closely correlated with a willingness to commit forces if friendly countries are attacked. But neither group rates the importance of American military *involvement* as anything like the importance of military *strength*.

The aversion to U.S. combat involvement would appear, on the face of it, to have its roots in the Vietnam War experience. This is borne out by comparison of responses above to attitudes toward the Vietnam War. First, only 8% of the public think that the Vietnam War was a "proud moment" in American history; 72% think it was a "dark moment"; and 15% chose neither view. Within these categories, responses to "attacks on friendly countries" divide as follows:

TABLE III-2. U.S. response to attacks on friendly countries

	Public %	Leaders %
Send military and economic aid, plus troops	23	34
Military and economic aid only	37	47
Economic aid only	22	6
Nothing	9	1
Not sure	9	12

TABLE III-3. Views of the Vietnam War—The Public

Comparison:	Proud Moment (8%)	Neither (15%)	Dark Moment (72%)
If friendly countries are attacked—The Public			
Send military and economic aid, plus troops	45%	33%	18%
Economic aid only	12	12	35
Military and economic aid only	27	38	40
Nothing	4	7	10
Not sure	12	10	7

People who see the Vietnam War as a "proud moment" are substantially more likely to favor circumstances that might lead to its repetition elsewhere, than were people who think of it as a "dark moment." Conversely, the latter are substantially more inclined to do nothing, or to limit our response to economic aid, than were the former—and they are less likely to be without an opinion on the matter!

U.S. MILITARY COMMITMENTS ABROAD—IN PARTICULAR

One-half of the public shares the view that the United States should keep its commitment to NATO in its current state—a position which was held by 62% of leaders. An additional 4% of the public (and 5% of the leaders) believe that we should increase that commitment. On the other side, 13% of the public (and 29% of leaders) think we should decrease our commitment to NATO; and only 7% of the public and 2% of leaders think we should withdraw altogether. (Of course, leadership views on decreasing support for NATO may reflect expressed willingness to negotiate reductions in both United States and Soviet European forces.)

However, this margin of support for our general commitment to NATO does not hold up in the face of specific probing into the circumstances that might justify U.S. military involvement, including the use of U.S. troops.

The following table speaks eloquently: only an invasion of Canada would evoke majority public support, and only that and an invasion of Western Europe (or a Soviet takeover of West Berlin) would evoke the majority support of leaders sampled. Of course, these questions do not take account of the popular and political climate that might prevail if any of these possibilities came to pass, nor the popular reaction to an appeal by the President or Secretary of State. In a time of peace, it is difficult to predict reactions in a future time of crisis. Yet the present reluctance to continue our post-World War II role in military security abroad is striking.

There are large differences between leadership and public support for United States involvement in five areas listed in this table: 13% difference for Canada, 38% Western Europe, 21% Berlin, 11% Cuba and 14% Israel. (In two of these cases the differences are potentially quite important: a majority of the leaders favor military involvement in case of attack on Western Europe or West Berlin, while only a minority of the general public—despite its attitudes towards NATO—are so inclined.) Only in three areas, (where communist countries are involved and these of a low order or priority), does public opinion in favor of a U.S. military and troop commitment outweigh leadership opinion.

(A word is in order concerning the relatively high number of "not sures" in both the leadership and public samples. For the public sample, only two contingencies did not approach one-quarter "not sures": invasion of Canada—close to home, but a most unlikely contingency; and Vietnam—where the reality of fighting is most recently vivid for Americans. But given the hypothetical nature of most of the problems mentioned, and the significance of the issues involved, being "not sure" might be construed as being a reasonable and considered response.)

Among those areas listed in the table where the United States might actually be called upon to act, two stand out in contrasting low public support and higher leadership support for military action: Western Europe and Israel. At the same time, leadership and public opinion are in near agreement on withholding support for the use of arms to defend Europe's and Japan's oil.

TABLE III-4. Circumstances under which favor or oppose U.S. military involvement, including the use of U.S. troops

	Public			Leaders		
	Favor %	Oppose %	Not Sure %	Favor %	Oppose %	Not Sure %
If Canada were invaded	77	12	11	90	4	6
If Western Europe were invaded	39	41	20	77	14	9
If the Russians took over West Berlin	34	43	23	55	33	12
If Castro's Cuba invaded the Dominican Republic in the Caribbean	32	44	24	43	46	11
If Israel were being defeated by the Arabs	27	50	23	41	44	15
If the Arabs cut off the oil supply to Western Europe	21	56	23	22	65	13
If North Korea attacked South Korea	14	65	21	19	67	14
If Communist China attacked India	16	59	25	17	70	13
If the Arabs cut off the oil supply to Japan	14	63	23	15	70	15
If Communist China invaded Formosa (Taiwan)	17	59	24	11	79	10
If the Soviet Union Attacked Yugoslavia after Tito's death	11	65	24	8	82	10
If North Vietnam launched a major attack against Saigon	11	72	16	6	87	7

In general, there is low public support for defending areas where war might actually occur, and United States commitments or interests actually tested.

Further questions were asked concerning attitudes toward the use of force in connection with Middle East oil. Only 25% of the public expressed a personal willingness to "support the use of military force by the oil-consuming countries, such as the U.S., Western Europe and Japan, to take oil out of the hands of the Arabs." A total of 59% are not willing to go that far. The question did not cite contingencies, such as high prices or a future embargo—"economic strangulation"—which have become a point of public dispute recently. Yet it did seek to explore the impact of Administration endorsement of such action: respondents who were not willing or not sure were then asked about their willingness in the event that the President and the Secretary of State asked for support. Even with this added factor, less than a third (32%) of the public were willing to endorse military force against the Arab oil-producing countries.

A further question underscores the low popularity of war as a tool for securing oil supplies. In the event of a further Arab embargo against the United States, Western Europe and Japan, only 6% of public opinion would choose invasion rather than some less drastic course (40% "share our oil with others"; 38% "go it alone"; 16% "not sure). Leadership opinion would choose invasion even less (4%), although it favors greater cooperation with other consumers (83% share; 10% "go it alone"; 3% "not sure").

MILITARY AID AND THE SALE OF ARMS

There is also the question of indirect U.S. involvement in possible foreign conflict—or support of foreign governments—through the providing of military aid. "Military aid to other nations" does not stand in high esteem, with 70% of the public sample and 73% of the leadership sample in favor of cuts. Military aid also ranks first among public opinion and second (after defense spending itself) among the leadership sample as the program to be cut back first. Significantly, however, in answer to a free-response question (regarding the drawbacks of United States aid to foreign nations), 19% of leaders cited "too much military/warfare aid," while only 4% of public opinion cited this factor. In part, this may reflect low public awareness of *military* aid as a component of *foreign* aid when the latter term is used alone. (The benefits of "foreign aid"—again undifferentiated—are at the same time seen as "peace" by 6% of the public sample, and to "prevent wars" by 17% of the leaders.)

Opinion on military aid to other nations is not quite so negative, at least among leaders, when the option stands alone rather than when it is put in the context of competing federal programs. Fifty-two percent of leaders oppose it on its own and 40% favor it. Among the general public, however, 65% oppose it and 22% favor it as a single option.

There is widespread belief that foreign military aid has some beneficial effect. Fully 69% of the public (80% of leaders) respond that this aid helps the national security of other countries; 60% (48% leaders) that it helps the economy of other countries, 49% (32% leaders) that it helps people in other countries live better; 44% (66% leaders) that it is a good substitute for the use of American troops and manpower; and 43% (65% leaders) that it strengthens our political friends abroad. Even the last item on the list—helps our economy at home—receives 31% public support (61% leaders). In one other area, leadership opinion registers a positive endorsement: helps our national security (55% to 36% of the public sample). But many of these effects seem to be only of secondary importance in evaluating aid.

The cleavage between public and leadership opinion on every issue in this list may reflect greater leadership confidence in the value of foreign military aid when its practical security, political and domestic effects are calculated. Why this should be so is not evident from the data other, perhaps, than the different sources of information available to leaders and the public at large.

The most striking differences between leadership and public opinion on negative effects of foreign military aid lie with its impact on the U.S. domestic economy: 54% of the public believe that it hurts our economy at home, compared to only 29% of the leaders who view it this way.

In deciding whether or not they favor military aid, for most people the *overriding consideration is the effect of this aid on our own national security*. People who believe military aid helps our own national security tend to support it: 66% do so. People who believe military aid does *not* help our own national security tend to *oppose* it: 65% do so. The story is told by the fact that 51% of the American people (36% disagree) do *not* think that military aid helps our own national security: they therefore oppose it.

Finally, the basic divergence between leadership and public opinion on support for foreign military aid is repeated with arms sales to other nations by the U.S. government. For both groups it is more popular (58% of leaders and 35% of the public support it) than is military aid—presumably for economic reasons, but also perhaps because of the greater "arms length" distance it may provide the United States from direct involvement in foreign conflict. But the program still does not have the support of a majority of the public.

THE HISTORY OF U.S. MILITARY POLICY—THE VIETNAM EXPERIENCE

In part, the way in which people today regard U.S. military policy, the defense budget, and foreign military aid will reflect views of U.S. actions in the past, and the impact of past actions on America's current place in the world. Public attitudes on this point are illustrated by the following table.

TABLE III-5. Proud and dark moments in American foreign policy history

	Proud	Neither	Dark	Don't Know
World War II	68%	11%	13%	8%
Korean War	22	27	41	10
Dominican Intervention	9	27	20	44
Vietnam War	8	15	72	5

These negative evaluations of our recent military history can be contrasted with the size of public support for the U.S. role in founding the United Nations (81%); President Kennedy's handling of the Cuban Missile Crisis (52%); the Berlin Airlift (52%); and U.S. support for Israel in October 1973 (42%).

Part of the reason for these negative judgments may be explained by the passage of time. But are there other factors, relating to views of war itself—and of America's self-image—that must be taken into account?

It would be helpful here to look further at specific attitudes on our most recent war—where memories are most vivid and lessons most likely to be applied to broader situations. First, public opinion is evenly divided, only about half (42% yes to 44% no) finding that Vietnam taught us we should not enter wars we cannot win (the leadership sample more firmly rejects this proposition, 38% to 55%).

Yet, at the same time, there is a sense of the *limitations of power* in certain kinds of war—that we have *not* learned from Vietnam that we could "stop aggressors who would take over our smaller allies" (35% to 45%, while leaders reflect a striking 24% and 69% against this proposition). In contrast, there is a plurality public view about the *way* in which the Vietnam War was conducted: opposition to "tying the hands" of the military. By 41% to 35%, the public sampled say they learned that this was the wrong way to fight a war—while the proposition is overwhelmingly rejected by U.S. leaders (by 15% to 79%).

More important than general lessons of Vietnam, to be applied to other situations, are the *specific qualities* of that conflict. Sixty-seven percent of public opinion (63% of leaders) learned from Vietnam that we should not support corrupt regimes; and 63% (72% leaders), that we should stay out of civil wars.

What then should we do? By 59% to 26% the public sampled think we have learned from Vietnam that we should send arms and supplies rather than lose men (leaders 51% to 35%).

Yet there is a further contrast, when the issue is broadened to include the general proposition of backing regimes we don't like, because a "communist takeover would be worse." Here, there is majority public support (52% to 32%) for this as a lesson of Vietnam—despite the overwhelming rejection of Vietnam as a dark moment in American foreign policy history (leaders divided 36% to 58% against this as a lesson of Vietnam).

In general, however, the "lessons of Vietnam" do not apply to overall political—or at least non-military—attitudes about a future U.S. role in the outside world. Among the public sampled on whether or not Vietnam was a proud or a dark moment, there is little variation in support of our taking an active role in the world (76% of those who chose "proud"; 70% who chose "neither"; 65% who chose "dark")—while U.S. leaders give the strongest response here to any question in the survey, a full 99% favor an active role.

THE ROLE OF THE MILITARY

Attitudes toward the American defense effort and U.S. military involvement can also be inferred from views of the role that military leaders (and others) do and should play in determining United States foreign policy. Here it is too hard to determine views accurately because of different concepts about which leaders would favor or oppose one or another action in the defense budget and military areas.

Fully 76% of the public believe that the military plays an important role in determining U.S. foreign policy (though only 36% rate it "very important," compared to 73% for the Secretary of State). Eighty-three percent of leaders, meanwhile, see the military as playing an important role (though only 34% rate it "very important").

What should be done about this role? The public sampled divide as follows: 19% want to make it more important; 43% want to keep it the same; 27% want to make it less important, for a balance of 8% in favor of a lesser role for the military. Leaders, however, are substantially in favor of a lesser role; only 4% believe the military should be more important than it is now and 55% believe it should be less important, for a balance of 51% for a lesser role.

Again, these statistics seem to support earlier conclusions about differences between public and leadership views on the desirability of cutting the defense budget.

IV. Attitudes Toward Political Relationships and Commitments Abroad

While the American people's perspectives on foreign policy have apparently undergone a substantial "demilitarization," there is no conclusive evidence of a concomitant desire to back away from international political relationships. We do not find a repetition of the post-World War I experience, when the U.S. withdrew politically as well as militarily. Rather, we find a portrait of a "post-imperial" foreign policy for the United States.

To begin with, there is strong support among the American people for the kind of cooperative international relationships and the peace-keeping activities that have been characteristic of U.S. foreign policy over the past generation. Eighty-two percent of the national sample, and 95% of the leadership sample, agreed with the statement that "problems like food, energy and inflation are so big that no country can solve them alone, and international cooperation is the only way we can make progress in solving these problems." On the subject of alliances, 51% of the national sample and 81% of the leaders thought that the U.S. should consult with its major allies before making any major foreign policy decisions. A substantial 86% of the national sample and 97% of the leaders also agreed with the view that the United States has a real responsibility to take a very active role in the world.

The American public is ambivalent about formal international organizations; supporting the principles and procedures rather more than the institutions themselves. Eighty-two percent of the respondents regarded the U.S. role in founding the United Nations as a proud moment in American history, but only 53% thought that it was "very important" for the United States to be a world leader in support of international organizations, such as the U.N. Three-fifths of both samples agreed with the following divergent proposals:

(1) "the U.N. is good in theory, but the real way to keep peace in the world is to have the super powers such as the United States and the Soviet Union agree that they will not allow other countries to wage war" (62% to 24% for the public, 61% to 34% for the leadership),

and

(2) "we should conduct more and more of our foreign affairs through genuinely international organizations" (60% to 23% for the public, 58% to 41% for the leadership).

Americans place more faith in international organizations like the U.N. when it comes to questions related to food, energy and inflation, than on keeping the peace.

But if there is ambivalence about international institutions, there is little doubt about the importance that people attach to peacekeeping activities and to favorable political relations with other countries: 82% of the national sample (and 91% of the leadership sample) believe that it is "very important" for the U.S. to be a world leader in "skill in negotiating settlements that avoid war." And when they were asked how important it was to have good relations with major countries and regions of the world, the responses, among the general public particularly, were impressive. While these are not controversial questions, they do suggest how widespread is the desire for peace and for friendly relations with other nations.

TABLE IV-1. Importance of having good relations with different nations and regions

	Very Important	
	Public	Leaders
Western Europe	75%	97%
Soviet Union	71	86
Japan	70	92
Arab Countries	68	76
Asia	63	60
Latin America	62	63
Africa	56	44

The "demilitarization" of American foreign policy attitudes suggested by the other data in this survey is manifested in the diminished antagonism and hostility of American public opinion toward certain communist countries. This is evident in the attitudes toward the Soviet Union reflected in the immediately preceding table. It is also clear in the responses to other questions: 58% of the public think that it is possible for the United States and Russia to reach long-term agreements to keep peace and when confronted with nine proposals for specific agreements (e.g., equal trade treatment, mutual reduction of troops in Europe, joint space missions) favorable majorities of between 60% and 83% were recorded among the public sample, and of between 85% and 97% among the leadership sample.

In view of the recent actions of both governments in the matter of "Most Favored Nation" (MFN) treatment for the Soviet Union, it is worth noting that the public favored giving the Soviet

Union the same trade treatment we give other countries by 62% to 24%, with 14% not sure. The leadership sample favored this proposal by a more substantial 85% to 13%, with only 3% undecided. Additionally, 72% of the public and 91% of the leaders were recorded as agreeing that we should work with the Soviet Union to keep smaller countries from going to war.

Comparable support is registered for an improvement of relations with other communist countries. Fifty-three percent of the national sample, and 84% of the leaders, favor the establishment of full diplomatic relations with Cuba. Eighty-two percent and 96% respectively agree that we have to learn to live with countries like the Soviet Union and communist China, and nearly 60% of the national sample regard former President Nixon's trip to Peking as a proud moment in American history. Fifty-five percent of the public and 76% of the leaders think that the United States and communist China can reach long-term agreements to keep the peace.

Communism is still a threatening phenomenon to at least a substantial minority of the population, even if we seem to have stabilized our relations with some particular communist countries. Thirty-six percent of the public believes that economic aid helps to prevent the spread of communism, and an equal proportion believes that military aid does likewise; this belief contributes to support for aid—especially military. In reviewing the "lessons of the Vietnam War," 51% of the national sample (but only 36% of the leaders) felt that the Vietnam War had taught us that we sometimes have to back governments we don't like because a communist takeover would be worse. Fifty-four percent of the national sample though that containing communism was a very important foreign policy goal for the United States (to be sure, many more thought other goals very important), and an additional 27% rated it as somewhat important. (The comparable figures for the leadership group were 34% and 48%.)

Most members of the public felt that if European countries in general were to become communist, it would be a threat to the United States. Fifty percent of the public considered a communist take-over in Italy a threat to the United States, and 47% concluded the same on Portugal.

TABLE IV-2. Reactions to possible communist takeovers

	Threat to U.S.		No Threat		Not Sure	
	Public	Leaders	Public	Leaders	Public	Leaders
Western European Countries	71%	68%	19%	25%	10%	7%
Latin American Countries	69	54	20	36	11	9
Japan	67	66	23	28	10	6
African Countries	51	30	34	62	14	8
Italy	50	45	36	47	14	8
Portugal	47	36	38	55	14	8

The attitudes reported here are consistent with former President Nixon's virtual declaration, in Peking and Moscow, that the Cold War was over, and with the measures of *detente* that have taken place since then. It is not unreasonable to attribute some part of the demilitarization of foreign policy attitudes to this changed state of formal political relations. The consequences of these changes have a bearing not only on the range of political possibilities that the American people are willing seriously to entertain, but also (and a little less reassuringly) on the stability of current attitudes, on an attendant loss of certitude and familiar bearings, as the formulas and rhetoric of the Cold War era have been discarded.

The uncertainty is visible, for example, in responses to such questions as how we as a nation should deal with other countries that violate human rights—questions which used to be subordinated to the overriding dictates of the Cold War competition.

When attitudes toward the violation of human rights are probed in the abstract, support for the human rights position is substantial. Sixty-seven percent of the national sample (and 87% of the leadership sample) agree with the statement that "the United States should put pressure on countries which systematically violate basic human rights." Sixty-four percent of both samples feel that, even if there is some advantage to the United States, it is not justified to back authoritarian governments that have overthrown democratic governments. And nearly three-fourths of both samples agree that it is "morally wrong for the United States to support a military dictatorship that strips its people of their basic rights, even if that dictatorship will allow us to set up military bases in that country." (Since military bases do not currently command much public support, the cross-pressures implicit in this question may in fact be operating rather as *joint* pressures, pushing the proportions who are against supporting such military dictatorships to these high levels.) In any event, when it comes to specifics the public response is less clear.

Popular attitudes on the question of whether "we should take a more active role in opposing the policy of apartheid —that is, racial separation—in South Africa" show a plurality in disagreement; 35% agree, 43% disagree and 22% are not sure. On the matter of the Soviet treatment of minorities 41% of the national sample agree that "how the Soviet Union handles the treatment of the Jews and other minority groups is a matter of internal Soviet politics, and none of our business," while 48% disagree with that hands-off position. Among the leaders, 34% agree that it is none of our business, while 64% disagree. These views contrast with near unanimity on the part of leaders for expanding trade with the Soviet Union, while two-thirds of the public concur. Thus there is popular support for the emigration objective of the Jackson-Vanik Amendment; but even stronger support for the expanding trade on which that amendment places conditions.

We have seen in the preceding section that the American people are reluctant to invest in or to depend on certain military means to accomplish their foreign policy goals. And we will see in the following section that while economic means are more acceptable than military, there is no unlimited enthusiasm for them either. The economy, in fact, has become the *object* of foreign policy, rather than its instrument.

What can we conclude here as to the political means that the people are willing to accept as appropriate for achieving their foreign policy objectives? Figures cited above indicate that there is strong support for traditional diplomacy—for negotiating skills—and for multilateral cooperation in attacking new and complex world problems. But the population is more divided on clandestine political interventions by the Central Intelligence Agency. When asked whether the secret political operations of the ~~CIA~~ should be expanded, cut back, or kept about the same, both the national sample and the leadership sample tended to favor cutbacks.

TABLE IV-3. Secret political operations of the CIA should be:

	Expanded	Cut Back	Kept about the same	Not Sure
Public	8%	39%	27%	26%
Leaders	2%	66%	23%	9%

But when asked, "In general, do you feel that the CIA should or should not work inside other countries to try to strengthen those elements that serve the interests of the United States and to weaken those forces that work against the interests of the U.S.?" the sample broke down as follows:

TABLE IV-4. Should the CIA work inside other countries?

	Should	Should Not	Not Sure
Public	43%	26%	31%
Leaders	35%	59%	6%

Forty percent of the public saw C.I.A. involvement in Chile as a dark moment for the U.S.—as against only 7% calling it a proud moment. Thus the general public apparently is more supportive and also more uncertain—about covert political action than are the leaders, the majority of whom believe that it should be cut back.

V. Economic Affairs

The greatest concern today of the American people—as we have seen—is with the U.S. economy. The most frequently mentioned "biggest problems" facing the country today were inflation, rising costs, recession and unemployment, and food and energy resources. Leaders shared these concerns.

This preoccupation with the American economy has two different, though related, implications for foreign policy. The public—and leaders as well—were reluctant to invest money and resources in foreign policy ventures rather than using that money at home. At the same time, however, there was a desire to use foreign policy actively to benefit the U.S. and world economies.

THE ECONOMIC CRISIS: INTERDEPENDENCE, COOPERATION, AND SACRIFICE

This desire rested on a perceived web of economic interdependence among nations—a perception that in some cases may exceed the objective situation. Most members of the public were aware of the rest of the world's dependence on the U.S. for food supplies, investment funds, and technology: 84%, 76%, and 72%, respectively of those surveyed concluded that the rest of the world depends "a lot" on the U.S. in those respects. They were also aware of American dependence on the rest of the world for gasoline and oil (71% seeing "a lot" of dependence), and for markets to sell manufactured products (41%) and as sources of raw materials for manufacturing (30%). Overwhelming majorities of over 80% saw the U.S. as at least "a little" dependent in these respects, and majorities saw some U.S. dependence on the rest of the world for manufactured products and food supplies.

Consequently, most Americans saw U.S. foreign policy as having a significant impact on the U.S. economy. Fully 87% saw a "major impact" of foreign policy on gasoline prices at home; 78% on the value of the dollar abroad; and 77% on the overall economy at home and on food prices. Large majorities also perceived a major impact on such matters as the sale of American products abroad (69%), supplies of raw materials for manufacturing (64%), the price of manufactured products at home (63%), unemployment (59%) and interest rates (56%). The leaders sampled largely agreed with these estimates.

The public therefore supported a number of foreign policy measures aimed at alleviating our own and the world's economic difficulties. Foremost among these were efforts at cooperation with our traditional allies among the advanced industrialized nations.

Eighty percent of the public favors oil consuming nations such as the U.S. Canada, Western Europe and Japan, getting together to develop strategies that would make us less dependent on the decisions of the foreign oil producing countries. Popular support for such cooperative efforts remained at the same high level even if it meant that we would all have to cut back our own gasoline consumption by 10%. And a slight majority still favored such cooperation if it meant spending U.S. tax dollars to support it. Foreign policy leaders were even more overwhelmingly in favor of such efforts.

Similarly, a large majority (83%) of the public favored making agreements with the Soviet Union to undertake joint efforts to solve the world energy shortage.

However, a plurality (39%) of the public was opposed to extending easy-term loans to developing countries that had large balance of payments deficits due to the high cost of oil. Over three-fifths (63%) of the 31% who favored such loans continued to favor them if it meant spending U.S. tax dollars, but that amounted to only about 20% of the public. On this matter the leaders

TABLE V-1. Cooperation on energy problems

	Favor		Oppose		Not Sure	
	Public	Leaders	Public	Leaders	Public	Leaders
Should oil-consuming nations get together?	80	97	6	1	14	2
Should oil-consuming nations get together, if it meant cutting back gasoline consumption 10%?	80	97	13	2	7	1
Should oil-consuming nations get together, if it meant spending U.S. tax dollars to support it?	54	91	34	5	12	4
Should we undertake joint efforts with the Soviet Union to solve the world energy shortage?	83	93	10	4	7	3

were substantially more willing to act: 72% favored such loans, and 93% of those continued to do so even if it meant spending U.S. tax dollars.

The public reactions indicate clearly —as noted in the section on military policy—that support for action to help the U.S. economy stopped short of the use of military force against the Arab oil-producing nations. Only 14% of the public favored U.S. military action if the Arabs cut off the oil supply to Japan—63% opposed it, and only 21% favored military involvement if the Arabs cut off the oil supply to Western Europe with 56% opposed. Even if the U.S. and other countries were faced with another oil embargo, only 6% favored invading the oil-producing countries; a plurality preferred to share our oil with Europe and Japan, even if it means less oil for Americans. Leaders preferred sharing by overwhelming ratios.

In addition to cooperative efforts to deal with economic problems (especially energy), the American public was prepared to make some unilateral sacrifices as well. A strong majority (87%) was willing to spend tax dollars to develop new energy sources, such as solar and coal, in order to become less dependent on foreign oil. Solid majorities expressed willingness to cut back on consumption of gasoline by 10% (78%); to go without meat one day a week in order to send food abroad to combat shortages; (75%) to cut out nonessential fertilizer (68%); and to accept a system of gasoline rationing (59%). For the most part, people saw not only themselves but also the people they knew as willing to make such sacrifices.

To some degree American leaders underestimated the willingness of the general public to sacrifice, particularly concerning the use of fertilizer and the consumption of meat. But, as the leaders correctly perceived, most Americans were highly reluctant to pay more for food in order to send food abroad: 70% said that they would personally not be willing to pay 10% more for food for that purpose. Indeed, the leaders were over optimistic in gauging public acceptance of a gasoline tax. A 25¢ per gallon tax was strongly opposed (62% not willing) even when it carried a refund on the income tax; and a 10¢ per gallon tax received acceptance only from 50%.

TABLE V-2. Preferred policies if U.S., Western Europe and Japan were faced with another Arab oil embargo

	Public %	Leaders %
Share our oil with Europe and Japan, even if it means less oil for Americans	40	83
Go it alone, and let Europe and Japan fend for themselves	38	10
Invade the oil-producing countries	6	4
Not sure	16	3

TABLE V-3. Willingness to accept measures dealing with the oil shortage—The Public

Measures to deal with oil shortage and dependence on oil-producing countries	Personal Willingness: Would Be Willing %	Not Willing %	Not Sure %	Willingness if Asked By The President And Secretary of State: Would Be Willing %	Not Willing %	Not Sure %
Spend tax dollars at home to develop new energy sources such as the use of solar rays and new coal technology, so that we become less dependent on foreign countries for gasoline	87	8	5	89	7	4
Cut back our consumption of gasoline by 10%, if it would reduce the amount of money we as a nation spend abroad for oil	78	17	5	83	13	4
Accept a system of gasoline rationing so that we could cut our consumption of gasoline and therefore reduce the amount of money we as a nation spend abroad on oil	59	28	13	66	23	11
Pay 10¢ a gallon more for gasoline, with a gas tax refund on your income tax, if it would cut back our consumption of gasoline and therefore reduce the amount of money we as a nation spend abroad on oil	50	41	9	56	34	10
Pay 25¢ a gallon more for gasoline, with a gas tax refund on your income tax, if it would cut back our consumption of gasoline and therefore reduce the amount of money we as a nation spend abroad on oil	30	61	9	36	52	12
Support the use of military force by the oil consuming countries, such as the U.S., Western Europe and Japan, and take oil out of the hands of the Arabs	25	59	16	32	52	16

There were some indications that willingness to sacrifice could be increased by political leaders, but only to a modest degree. When those who had declared themselves "not willing" to make a particular sacrifice, or "not sure," were asked whether they would be willing if the President and the Secretary of State were to ask the people in this country to do it, a few more persons said that they would. In most cases, however, these people would add only between 5% and 7% to the total expressing willingness to make a given sacrifice, and would not change the direction of public reaction.

We cannot be sure, of course, whether people are able accurately to forecast their response to appeals by the nation's political leaders. If they are, the influence of leadership appears to be rather slight. The general willingness to go without meat one day a week, or to cut gasoline consumption, or to spend tax dollars on developing energy resources, could be increased a little further by urging from the President and the Secretary of State. But even such urgings, according to those surveyed, could not convince them to accept such unpopular measures as paying 10% more for food, or paying a 25¢ per gallon gasoline tax. And the strong rejection of using military force against oil producing countries would remain almost unaffected.

ECONOMIC AID FOR DEVELOPMENT AND EMERGENCY RELIEF

The same concern with the U.S. economy that leads to support for cooperative efforts and sacrifices to meet economic problems leads also to a great reluctance to invest heavily in support of economic development abroad. A majority of Americans (56%), favored cutting back on economic aid, compared with only 10% favoring expansion and 28% wanting to keep it at the same level. Twenty-four percent named it as one of the first one or two federal programs (out of 13) that should be cut back. And when people were asked to name two or three of the biggest foreign policy problems facing the U.S., the most common responses were a need to cut foreign aid and to help the U.S. first. The sentiment to cut economic aid, while not so strong as that to cut military aid, was substantial.

Only emergency relief received overwhelming support: 93% of the public favored giving emergency food and medical supplies in cases of natural disasters, such as floods or earthquakes. And, as we have noted, Americans were willing to reduce consumption of meat and of fertilizers in order to help provide food for hungry nations. Yet even this willingness was limited: the public (by 70% to 22%) resisted the idea of paying higher food prices to send food abroad.

One concern underlying opposition to economic aid was the state of the U.S. economy. Few respondents (only 25%) believed that economic aid to other countries helps our economy at home; 63% thought that it hurts our economy. While most people felt that economic aid helps the economy of other countries (77%), helps the people in other countries live better (70%), and helps the national security of other countries (64%), these aims apparently did not have high priority. Less than a plurality of the public accepted the original arguments for economic aid—that it helps our own national security (44%) or that it helps prevent the spread of communism (36%). Large majorities feared that it makes other countries too dependent on the U.S. (74%), gets us too involved in other countries' affairs (73%), and makes the rulers of foreign countries rich (66%). A narrow majority felt that economic aid aggravates relations with other countries (52%).

The most important reasons for opposition to economic aid, as revealed in the strength of their relationships with the aid question, were doubts that aid helps our own national security, and doubts that aid helps our economy at home. More altruistic considerations, such as whether it helps people in other countries live better or helps the economy of other countries—or whether, on the other hand, it merely makes the rulers of foreign countries rich—played a much less significant part in affecting public attitudes.

Moreover, judgments about whether or not economic aid helps prevent the spread of communism played next to the smallest role in decisions whether to favor or oppose economic aid; and concern with whether or not aid aggravates relations with other countries played the smallest part of all. The traditional justification for foreign aid, invoked strongly during the 1950's, has

TABLE V-4. Willingness to accept measures dealing with the food shortage—The Public

	Personal Willingness			Willingness If Asked By The President And Secretary Of State		
Measures to deal with food shortages abroad	Would Be Willing %	Not Willing %	Not Sure %	Would Be Willing %	Not Willing %	Not Sure %
Go without meat one day each week, in order to send more food abroad to help nations with food shortages	74	23	3	79	19	2
Cut out all unessential uses of fertilizer at home, including uses to beautify our lawns, so that more fertilizer would be available to other countries to help improve their agricultural crops and avoid starvation in these countries	68	23	9	74	18	8
Pay 10% more for food at home, in order to cut food consumption at home and send more food abroad to help nations with food shortages	22	70	8	30	59	11

lost much of its hold on the American people.

Further, most Americans rated our relations with developing nations as being less important, on the whole, than relations with industrialized nations, both Western and communist. Whereas 75% called relations with Western Europe "very important," 56% made the same judgment about Africa.

Finally, there was some evidence that average Americans were skeptical about how much benefit economic aid actually brings to the intended recipients. Only 9% thought that most of the economic aid we send abroad ends up helping the people of the countries; 52% thought that "only some" of the aid does so, and 34% thought "hardly any" helps the people of those countries.

American leaders were considerably more willing to give economic aid than was the general public. Forty-two percent (as contrasted with only 10% of the public) wanted to expand such aid. Practically all of the leaders (93%) favored economic aid in general, and a large majority (72%) favored easy-term loans to developing countries with large deficits ~~due~~ to oil costs. Among the general public, those with a college education (perhaps because they, like the national leaders, were less affected than average Americans by the recession) expressed more favorable attitudes toward economic aid.

TABLE V-5. Foreign economic aid—The Public

	Favor %	Oppose %	Not Sure %
Economic aid for purposes of economic development and technical assistance	52	38	10
Giving economic aid if sure that it ended up helping the people of those countries	79	13	8

The leaders held dramatically different beliefs from those of the public concerning the effects of economic aid. On the question of helping our own national security, 78% (34% more than the general public) thought that economic aid does so. And 69% (a full 44% more than among the general public) felt that economic aid helps our economy at home. Far fewer feared that aid makes other countries too dependent on the U.S., or that it gets us too involved in other countries' affairs.

Despite these findings, it would be an error to conclude that most Americans were strongly and unalterably opposed to economic assistance. The goals of raising the world standard of living, and of combatting world hunger, were generally subscribed to. The Marshall Plan of aid to Europe and the founding of the Peace Corps as well as the sending of emergency food to Bangladesh were widely cited as "proud moments," in contrast to the many "dark moments" associated with American involvement in wars and covert operations abroad.

Indeed most of the American public (52%, with 38% opposing) generally favored giving economic aid to other nations for purposes of economic development and technical assistance. The improvement of the American economy might well lead to considerably greater support for backing that commitment with substantial funds. And a strong majority, 79% of the public, declared that it would favor the giving of economic aid if they could be sure that it ended up helping the people of those countries.

If the American people could be given convincing evidence that their aid ended up in the right hands; or if new means could be devised to ensure that aid helped the people of recipient countries, Americans might be willing to support the giving of substantial amounts of such aid even in a time of economic hardship.

VI. Who Makes Foreign Policy?

In the era following Watergate and Vietnam, there is heightened sensitivity in the United States to how public decisions are made and by whom. The excesses of the Watergate period focused public attention on the role of the White House and the President. Two decades of U.S. military intervention, culminating in U.S. military involvement in Vietnam, had previously focused attention on the role of Congress, the State Department, the CIA, and the Defense Department as well as the President and the White House.

This survey, conducted four months after Gerald Ford succeeded Richard Nixon as President, confirmed the preeminence of Secretary of State Henry Kissinger as the most important actor in determining U.S. foreign policy. An overwhelming 97% of U.S. leaders view Dr. Kissinger as playing a "very important" role, and 73% of the public support this view.

In contrast, the President is viewed by only 51% of the leaders as being "very important" and by 49% of the public as "very important" in the conduct of foreign policy. The comparable figures for the role of the military are 34% and 36%; for the State Department 27% and 38%; for American business 25% and 42%, Congress 18% and 39%, the CIA 18% and 28% and public opinion 15% and 19%. These figures about popular attitudes make it clear that there is a discrepancy between leadership and public estimation of the role of American business and of the United States Congress in making U.S. foreign policy, with the public seeing each as more important than the leaders do.

TABLE VI-1. Very important role currently played by various parties in determining U.S. foreign policy

	Public %	Leaders %
The Secretary of State	[illegible]	[illegible]
The President	[illegible]	[illegible]
American business	[illegible]	[illegible]
The Congress	[illegible]	[illegible]
The State Department as a whole	[illegible]	[illegible]
The military	[illegible]	[illegible]
The CIA	[illegible]	[illegible]
The United Nations	[illegible]	[illegible]
Labor unions	[illegible]	[illegible]
Public opinion	19	15

But who should be more important—who less important—in making American foreign policy? Fifty-eight percent of leaders polled felt Congress should be more important and 55% also agree with regard to the State Department as a whole. Only 7% felt the Secretary of State should be more important. By contrast, fifty-eight percent of the public believes that public opinion should play a more important role; and 49% feel the Congress' role should be more important; 44% for the President; and 30% for the Secretary of State.

Both samples support the view that Congress plays too weak a role in determining foreign policy in comparison with the role of the President—only 10% of both public and leaders believe that Congress plays too strong a role; while 51% of leaders and 38% of the public believe Congress is playing too weak a role. But at the same time, both samples rate the job that the Secretary of State is doing very high—85% positive rating (combined "excellent" and "pretty good" performance) among leaders, and 75% among the total public. The rating of Mr. Kissinger as Secretary of State is highest among business, educational and political leaders (96%/90%/87%) and lowest among labor leaders and leaders of minority groups (50% and 58%).

Leaders and public are also inclined to grant the Secretary of State considerable latitude in his diplomatic style. Fifty-three percent of leaders and 58% of the public believe that Kissinger's kind of diplomacy is "necessary and in the best interests of the United States," and only 38% and 26%, respectively, believe he has been "too secretive and has not consulted our allies enough."

On working for peace, the Secretary of State continues to receive higher marks than the President. Among leaders and public, Mr. Ford rates "excellent" with only 9% and 10%, respectively, and "pretty good" with 43% and 40%, respectively. However, these ratings compare favorably with those for Congress—with 2% of the leaders and

5% of the public rating Congress' performance as "excellent" while 30% and 37% rate Congress' job as "pretty good." Again, leaders proved to be more critical of Congress than the public at large.

In this survey—conducted before the recent disclosures about the alleged domestic role of the CIA—the agency received a 44% positive job performance rating by leaders and 38% negative; (public ratings 31% positive, 39% negative). The public is more supportive of CIA activities inside other countries to "strengthen those elements that serve weaken those forces that work against the United States." 35% of leaders support such work, and 59% oppose it. Of the public, 43% support such activities and only 26% oppose it.

Overall, the American public continues to want strong initiatives by the Secretary of State while increasing the influence of Congress and public opinion. But to what extent is the public prepared to support the curtailing of freedom and flexibility for the Secretary of State, in order to give Congress a larger role? The views expressed in this survey do not provide a clear answer. It is also not clear how far the public will go in supporting a larger role for Congress, if this in fact means cutting back on the power of the Secretary of State.

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AMERICAN PUBLIC OPINION AND U.S. FOREIGN POLICY 1979

Edited by John E. Rielly

The Chicago Council on Foreign Relations

The objective of the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations is to promote, by all appropriate educational means, public understanding of the foreign policy of the United States. The Council is a non-profit, non-partisan organization which seeks to present a discussion of major foreign policy issues through research, publications, speakers, seminars and conferences.

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Introduction

The survey on which this report is based was conducted in November and December, 1978, shortly after the 96th Congress was elected. President Carter had been in office for almost two years, long enough for the Administration to have established a foreign policy identity. Among major policy issues of the time, inflation had become so serious that a Democratic president gave it top priority in shaping his budget for the 1979-80 fiscal year. By November, 1978, it also became clear that the hope expressed by candidate Carter in 1976 of devoting less attention to foreign affairs and more to domestic affairs was ephemeral. During President Carter's first two years in the White House, he found himself spending a very large amount of time on international questions, as had all of his predecessors for three decades.

This is the second public opinion survey and analysis sponsored by The Chicago Council on Foreign Relations, and it is being released exactly four years after the first, which was conducted in November and December, 1974. The results of the earlier survey were summarized in a report issued in March, 1975 entitled "American Public Opinion and U.S. Foreign Policy, 1975."

During the four-year interval, the focus of American foreign policy has shifted from a preoccupation with the role of the United States in Southeast Asia to a growing concern about the increasing military power and political influence of the Soviet Union, not only in Western Europe but in Africa and the Middle East as well. By 1976 this concern with the Soviets had become so strong that Congress reversed the established trend toward cutting the military budget. A slow increase in real defense expenditures began during the final years of the Ford Administration. By 1978 President Carter was sufficiently concerned about the growing Soviet strategic military buildup to make a commitment to the NATO allies to increase defense expenditures by 3% after inflation was discounted. The increase was reflected in the budget presented to the Congress in January, 1979.

The four-year interval also witnessed a clear shift in the policy of detente with the Soviet Union. The great expansion of trade that some had anticipated in the early Nixon-Kissinger years had not been realized.

The importance of the Middle East in American foreign policy considerations continued during the period. Much of the first two years of the Carter Administration was spent trying to achieve a negotiated settlement between Egypt and Israel. The hopes aroused by the tentative settlement reached at Camp David in September, 1978, were reflected in December when President Sadat and Prime Minister Begin were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. When the popular survey was taken in late November, those hopes had not yet been frustrated by the Egyptian-Israeli disagreements and misunderstanding that followed. In Iran the growing opposition to the Shah had not yet crystallized the forces that a few weeks later would become strong enough to compel the Shah's departure.

The 1974-78 period also saw a continuation of the trend toward greater Congressional participation in foreign policy. The major foreign policy decisions of the Carter Administration during the first two years—including the consent to ratification of the Panama Canal Treaties, the sale of sophisticated aircraft to Israel, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia, and the second Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty—all required Congressional action. As the 1970s wore on, memories of presidential predominance in the Vietnam era waned, and momentum to curb the freedom of the White House in the field of foreign policy diminished. However, there was no clear swing back to the era of presidential domination that prevailed throughout the 1960s.

Another important development during the 1974-78 period was the emergence of China as an active participant in world affairs. The announcement of resumption of formal diplomatic relations between the U.S. and the People's Republic of China came after most of the field work for this survey had been completed. But it was already clear by November, 1978, that relations between the United States and China—as well as between China and Japan and China and Western Europe—had improved vastly over the four-year interval. China's relations with the Soviet Union during the period of Soviet military ascendancy remained cool, while Japanese-Soviet relations deteriorated. As the United States withdrew from Southeast Asia, the Chinese presence was increasingly felt in the area, as was that of Vietnam. Chinese troops have massed on the Vietnam border, and tensions have been increased by Vietnam's invasion of Cambodia.

While diplomatic and security considerations continue to be important, international economic issues have assumed a greater role in American foreign policy. A United States trade imbalance of $25 billion in 1978, combined with high rates of inflation, resulted in a sharp decline in the value of the U.S. dollar. As the results of this survey show, the continuing decline of the dollar is seen by a large share of both the "public" and "leaders" as the principal reason for a deteriorating United States position in the world.

When the first survey was done four years ago, an important question was whether the American public and leaders would continue to support active involvement of the United States overseas, a role of world responsibility, despite the political frustration that followed a decade of massive military involvement in Vietnam. Results at that time showed that despite the mood of withdrawal and a firm desire to reduce commitments, there was no drastic move toward isolation. Today, skepticism about overseas commitments remains, but there is support for strong participation by the United States in world affairs provided that involvement is not primarily military.

The possible roles of the United States are diverse, and the study was geared to find out what they might be. The survey sought to address such issues as the relationship between domestic and foreign policy priorities, the appropriate responses to the growing military power of the Soviet Union, the sacrifices the American public and leaders are prepared to make to implement policies, and the roles of various individuals and institutions in the creation of foreign policy.

The Chicago Council on Foreign Relations commisioned the Gallup Organization to conduct surveys of both the public and national leaders in order to address these questions. The popular survey involved a stratified, systematic national sample of 1,546 respondents, representing Americans 18 years of age and older. Questions were weighted to eliminate sampling distortions with respect to age, sex, or race. The field work for this part of the survey was conducted between November 17 and 26, 1978.

The leadership sample included 366 individuals representing, as best determined, Americans in senior positions with knowledge of and influence upon international affairs and foreign policy. They were chosen in roughly equal proportions from the national political and governmental world and included senators and representatives (chiefly members of the Foreign Relations, International Relations, and Armed Services Committees) and officials with international responsibilities from the State, Treasury, Defense, and other departments. Leaders also were drawn from the business community (presidents, chairmen, and international vice presidents of large corporations as well as leaders of business associations); from the communications field (editors and publishers of major newspapers, wire service executives, television broadcasters); from education (presidents and scholars from major colleges and universities); and from foreign policy institutes.

In lesser numbers leaders also were drawn from national labor unions, churches, voluntary organizations (fraternal and others), and ethnic and other politically-oriented institutions. The interviews in the leadership survey were conducted between November 20, 1978, and January 12, 1979.

All interviewing, collating, and tabulating was done through the facilities of the Gallup Organization, Inc. The design and contents of the questionnaire were prepared by the editor and the following consultants:

> Bernard Cohen, Professor of Political Science, University of Wisconsin at Madison; Arthur Cyr, Program Director, The Chicago Council on Foreign Relations; Benjamin Page, Associate Professor of Political Science, University of Chicago; Robert Pearson, Assistant Study Director, National Opinion Research Center; William Schneider, Associate Professor of Government, Harvard University.

The questionnaire was reviewed by a number of individuals in the U.S. Congress, the Executive Branch, universities, and foreign policy institutes.

In preparing the report we have benefited from an analysis by the Gallup Organization. The analysis and interpretation of data presented in the report represent the joint efforts of the above group working with the editor. We also have benefited from other recent studies in the public opinion field, such as the volume published by the Potomac Associates, *State of the Nation, 1976* by William Watts and Lloyd Free, and *U.S. Foreign Policy: Principles for Defining the National Interest*, a 1976 report from the Public Agenda Foundation.

Once again we have published the analysis of the data as quickly as possible after field work was completed. The response to the earlier report confirmed the judgment of The Chicago Council on Foreign Relations that the advantages of a brief but timely summary analysis outweigh the disadvantages of being unable to prepare a comprehensive study in so short a period of time. This report should be considered in that light. The data derived from this study will be placed on deposit with the Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, Michigan, and the Roper Center for Public Opinion, Williamstown, Mass. and will be available to scholars.

I wish to express my deep appreciation to the Gallup Organization—especially to Leonard Wood and Nancy Nygreen—for their excellent cooperation in working within a tight deadline. Many other friends and colleagues assisted in the completion of this project. Among those who deserve special mention are Sanford Ungar, managing editor of *Foreign Policy Quarterly*; David Gergen and William Schambra of *Public Opinion* magazine; Andrew Mulligan of the European Community Information Office; Frank Sutton and Enid Schoettle of the Ford Foundation; and Al Richman of the Bureau of Public Affairs of the State Department.

I want to take this opportunity to express my deep appreciation to my principal collaborators: Bernard Cohen, Arthur Cyr, Benjamin Page, Robert Pearson, and William Schneider. Special thanks are due to Nora Dell, Editor and Director of Publications of The Chicago Council on Foreign Relations, who worked with us at every stage of the project, arranged for the design and layout of the report, and was responsible for seeing it through publication. Thanks also are due to Norma Newkirk and Maureen Petronzio who displayed skill and good humor in typing the manuscript and many drafts. I also want to thank the members of the Council staff who volunteered their help at various stages in the production of this report. Finally, I want to express appreciation to the Ford Foundation, the European Community Information Office, and the Board of The Chicago Council on Foreign Relations for jointly funding the project.

John E. Rielly, Editor
President
The Chicago Council
on Foreign Relations
February 15, 1979

Summary Findings

SELECTIVE INTERNATIONALISM

Two years after President Jimmy Carter took office, the American people and their leaders continued to be preoccupied with what they saw as the diminishing position of the United States as the preeminent global power, attributing this change above all to the declining value of the dollar and, secondly, to the growing military power of the Soviet Union. On the security side, the Soviet Union has replaced Vietnam as the central preoccupation of American foreign policy. But the preoccupation with the growing military and political influence of the Soviet Union does not seem to mean that we are experiencing a return to the Cold War. Although the containment of Communism remained an important goal of American foreign policy in the eyes of respondents, it clearly has receded in priority compared to the Cold War years of the 1950s and 1960s.

Both the public and the leaders displayed an ambivalent attitude toward the role of Communism and communist governments in the world today. Though fearful of the consequences of increasing Soviet military power, both groups were less concerned about the role of a communist government in China or the possibility of communist governments coming to power through elections in Western Europe. This ambivalence extended to the Soviet Union as well. To assuage their fears of growing Soviet military power, they were prepared to increase support for the defense budget in general and expenditures on NATO in particular. Respondents also displayed a greater willingness to commit troops in defense of selected allied countries than was the case four years ago. At the same time, they favored cooperative relationships with the Soviet Union in the fields of science, trade and commerce, and arms control.

The Chicago Council on Foreign Relations' study found that the American people and leaders were interested in maintaining international involvement but that they also were concerned about hedging and restraining foreign commitments.

PRIORITY OF FOREIGN POLICY

In any assessment of the attitude of the American people and their leaders toward foreign policy one of the first questions to be addressed is the priority given to foreign policy issues in relation to other public policy matters. If interest expressed in foreign news is a valid indication, attention to foreign affairs has declined. Almost twice as many people were "very interested" in national or local news (48% and 57%, respectively) than were interested in news about other countries (26%). Interest in United States relations with other countries was higher, however, (44%).

Declining interest in foreign affairs news was consistent with a general decline of interest in public affairs news generally. Over the four-year period between 1974 and 1978, interest in national news and state news declined from 56% to 48% and from 47% to 41%, respectively. Only interest in news about the local community increased slightly, from 56% to 57%. That was consistent with the decline in the number of those "very interested" in the news about relations of the United States with other countries—from 50% in 1974 to 44% in 1978.

In evaluating priorities, domestic economic concerns once again came out on top. A total of 78% of the public and 90% of the leaders listed domestic economic issues as the most significant problem facing the country, which could be addressed by governmental action. Not surprisingly, inflation emerged as the number-one problem, with 67% of the public and 85% of the leaders listing it on top. Similarly, in ranking government programs foreign policy items received a lower priority than domestic ones. Comparatively high levels of support were registered by the public for expanding expenditures on education (55%), farm subsidies (30%), and highways (34%). In contrast, only 5% supported increased military aid, and 11% supported increased economic aid. The only international area receiving substantially increased support was defense spending, with 34% favoring more expenditures in this area (compared with 14% in 1974).

Relatively low interest in international affairs should not be confused with total lack of concern or inability to differentiate among issues. As in the 1974 survey, there was a marked emphasis on economic problems as among the most significant facing the country, yet addressable by government action. Under the economic rubric, attention was focused much more directly than in 1974 on inflation as the number-one problem. A total of 67% of the public mentioned this concern (compared with 56% in 1974), as did 85% of the leaders. In the earlier survey other economic problems, including unemployment and the energy crisis, were stressed more. Among the many inferences that might be drawn from this is that economic concerns in a foreign policy context reflect the sensitivity of both public and leaders to changing developments in the domestic economy and to the reality of economic interdependence.

ROLE OF THE UNITED STATES IN THE WORLD

Consistent with reduced interest in foreign news and the lower priority given to government programs in the international area, a smaller percentage of both public and leadership favored the United States playing an active part in world affairs (66% in 1974 vs. 59% in 1978). That was the lowest figure recorded by Gallup on the question since 1947. There was on the part of both public and leaders a continued anxiety about the esteem enjoyed by the United States today, with 56% of the public and 47% of the leaders believing there has been a decline of regard for the United States compared with ten years ago. Yet 47% of the public and 46% of the leaders believed the United States should play a more important and powerful role ten years from now.

Despite the malaise of the post Vietnam years, 66% of the public and 87% of the leaders believed that the United States has been a "force for good" rather than a "force for evil" in foreign policy since World War II. That view was held despite the fact that 72% of the public agreed with the statement that "the Vietnam War was more than a mistake, it was fundamentally wrong and immoral."

The more limited role envisaged was accompanied by a reluctance to commit United States troops in crisis situations in many parts of the world, with the notable exceptions of Western Europe, Japan, or United States neighbors. Only a very small percentage of the public supported using United States troops in case of attack by North Korea on South Korea (21%), by Arab forces on Israel (22%), by Soviet troops on Yugoslavia (18%), by mainland China on Taiwan (20%), or if Rhodesia were invaded by Cuban troops supplied by the Soviet Union (25%).

FOREIGN POLICY PRIORITIES

The foreign policy priorities of both leaders and public reflected the more limited world role described above. When asked to cite the two or three most important foreign policy problems facing the United States today, the two areas most frequently mentioned by both groups were the Middle East (20% public and 47% leaders) and relations with the Soviet Union (13% public and 46% leaders). For the public, an additional important goal was reducing foreign aid (18%). When asked to rate a series of foreign policy goals, they gave such economic issues as "keeping up the value of the dollar" a score of 86%; "protecting the jobs of American workers," 78%; and "securing adequate supplies of energy," 78%. In contrast, "protecting the interests of American business abroad" received only 45%; "strengthening the United Nations," 47%; "defending human rights in other countries," 39%; and "helping to bring a democratic form of government to other nations," 26%.

One of the traditional Cold War priorities —"containing Communism"— received less attention than the current concern with the Soviet Union might lead one to expect. Of 13 foreign policy goals listed, 60% of the public and 45% of the opinion leaders considered containing Communism a "very important goal." That represented the fifth ranked priority for the public and the seventh for the leaders. Of a list of five friendly countries (Chile, France, Iran, Italy, and Mexico), the majority of the public regarded the coming to power of a communist government through peaceful elections as a "great threat" only in the case of Mexico (53%). Among the leaders, both Iran (52%) and Mexico (51%) received a majority.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Despite the emphasis placed on it by the Carter Administration, promoting human rights overseas did not emerge as a top-ranking foreign policy goal of the American people. When asked in the abstract, 67% of the public and 29% of the leaders expressed support for "pressuring countries which violate human rights." When applied to specific cases, a much smaller percentage supported action. Only 40% of the public favored the United States taking an active stance in opposing apartheid in South Africa, and only 42% disagreed with the statement that "how the Soviet Union handles the treatment of the Jews or other minority groups is a matter of internal Soviet politics and none of our business."

VITAL INTERESTS

In order to define further the areas of priority concern in American foreign policy, we asked both the public and leaders to indicate whether the United States had a "vital interest" in any of 24 different countries. The response indicated that a majority of public and leaders believed the United States had a vital interest in a diverse range of nations around the globe. Specifically, of 24 countries listed, a strong majority of more than 65% of the public indicated a vital interest in 12 countries. A majority of the leaders identified 16 countries of vital interest. For all 24 countries listed, an average of 60% of the public and 78% of the leaders saw a vital interest. Among the public, Saudi Arabia (80%) and Japan and Israel (78% each) came out on top. Among the leadership, Japan (99%) and West Germany (98%) were rated highest, followed by Canada, Saudi Arabia, and the Soviet Union (95% each) and Great Britian (94%).

To achieve another sort of reaction, the public was asked to give these 24 countries a degree-ranking on a "feeling thermometer" (literally a picture of a thermometer on a card, see Figure III-1) depending on how warm/favorable or cold/-unfavorable they regarded them. Most countries were placed around the middle of the thermometer. But unusually warm feelings were registered for two countries with unusually close ties to the United States—Canada (72%) and Britain (67%). Two communist states, the Soviet Union (34°) and Cuba (32°) fell to the bottom of the rankings. The People's Republic of China, in this context, was rated rather high at 44°.

In addition to applying the feeling thermometer to countries, respondents were asked to use the same scale for 14 well-known United States and foreign political figures. Individuals seen to be heavily associated with foreign affairs were ranked about the same by self-described liberals and conservatives, but the attentive public was more favorable to them. Menachim Begin, Henry Kissinger, Senator Daniel P. Moynihan, Anwar Sadat, Helmut Schmidt, and Cyrus Vance fell into this category.

INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC ISSUES

International economic issues loomed large in foreign policy considerations, with inflation and the decline of the dollar as the most important. Awareness of the interdependence between events overseas and their consequences on the lives of individual Americans, so evident in the 1974 survey, continued. United States foreign policy was seen as having a major impact on the value of the dollar by 82% of the public and 77% of the leaders. Among the public, 85% believed foreign policy had a major impact on gasoline prices at home, 72% that it affected the United States economy, 64% that it influenced food prices at home, and 51% that unemployment at home was affected.

An impressive 94% of the public interviewed were aware of the dollar's decline, and 67% of the public and 66% of the leaders felt "great concern" over this decline. Among the public, 36% believed the decline in value of the dollar was the most important reason for the declining United States influence in the world, more important than the growing military power of the Soviet Union. To strengthen the dollar, 51% of the public favored cutting government spending, even if it meant curtailing government services. They also favored raising tariffs (31%). Leaders also supported curtailment of government spending, were prepared to raise the price of gasoline by 25% (51%), and would risk higher unemployment (44%) in order to arrest the decline of the dollar. By contrast, 50% of the public were opposed to actions that would raise the price of gas by 25%.

Contrasts in attitude were especially apparent between the two main economic sectors, business and labor. A total of 89% of business leaders but only 42% of labor leaders were in favor of eliminating tariffs. Almost all business leaders (91%) saw inflation as a very important problem, whereas 68% of labor leaders felt that way; 37% of labor but only 11% of business regarded unemployment as a significant problem. Twenty-one percent of labor wanted to cut foreign aid, compared to only 4% of business. Business leaders were more in favor of a "very important" foreign policy role for the president (34%) than were labor officials (16%). Labor preferred a strong foreign policy role for Congress (53%), but only 29% of the business leaders held that view.

EUROPE

As the largest trading area in the world, the European Community continued to grow in significance during an era when the importance of international economic considerations has increased in relation to security and political issues. The Council's survey revealed a substantial increase in knowledge by the American people of the European Community, from 45% in 1973 (when the Gallup Organization last put the question to the public) to 63% in 1978. A total of 31% believed that ties between the United States and Western Europe were closer today than they were a decade ago. A series of more specialized questions were put only to leaders. Among them, 60% responded that the European Community had been helpful to the United States, with only 5% seeing it as harmful; the European Parliament was viewed with favor by 69%, compared to 16% unfavorable. Leaders also strongly favored the new European Monetary System by 69% to 19%, and they split evenly at 36% on the question of whether ties between the United States and Europe were closer today than they were a decade ago. Business leaders were more favorable than their labor counterparts about the overall relationship between the United States and Western Europe (79% to 69%).

FOREIGN AID

In a period when increasingly selective overseas involvement by the United States enjoys support, it is not surprising that the foreign aid program, both economic and military, continued to decline in public support. From 1974 to 1978 the percentage of the public supporting economic aid in general dropped from 52% to 46%. Foreign aid continued to be seen as an entering wedge for further involvement, with 25% of the public believing that economic aid gets the United States too involved with other countries. When applied to a specific area such as Africa, 44% of the public favored giving economic aid to black African nations. But the majority (57%) expressed concern that such aid would lead to United States military involvement in the area.

Less than half (45%) of the public believed that foreign economic aid helps our national security, prevents the spread of Communism (36%), or is beneficial to our economy (34%). Support for foreign aid, which has always been stronger among the leadership groups, showed 91% of the leaders favoring economic aid in 1978. They believed that economic aid helps the national security of the United States (71%), strengthens the national security of other countries (82%), helps the United States economy (63%), and helps the economy of other countries (98%). The leaders also believed that foreign economic aid strengthens our political friends (75%) and involves only an acceptable risk (34%) of getting us too involved in other countries' affairs.

Military aid continued to be unpopular, though the actual level of public support increased somewhat from 22% to 29% between 1974 and 1978. The constituency for military aid was not the same as for economic aid. Among the leadership, 91% favored economic aid, and only 60% favored military aid. Among the public, 39% of those who favored economic aid were against military aid, but only 19% of military aid supporters opposed economic aid. Self-described liberals, not suprisingly, were more positive about economic assistance than were self-described conservatives, liberals being 18% more in favor of than against aid. Conservatives were only 0.5% more in favor of aid than against it.

Both self-described conservatives and liberals were, in net terms, strongly opposed to military aid. Among the public, those who supported military aid tended to be more conservative in their views on Communism and security issues than those who supported economic aid. This group responded more strongly in defining important foreign policy goals, with a higher percentage giving priorities to containing Communism (68% to 61%), the security of our allies (66% to 56%), and protecting American interests abroad (52% to 42%).

DEFENSE AND SECURITY ISSUES

As noted earlier, simultaneously with an increased desire to curtail global commitments there was a significant rise in support of defense spending. In 1978 support for the view that the United States should take an active role in the world, while still held by the majority (59%), was the lowest since 1947 and 7% lower than in 1974 (66%). This has been accompanied by a 5% shift over the past four years in the number of those who said it was "better if we stay out" of involvement in world affairs, from 34% in 1974 to 29% in 1978.

Yet among the public, 32% opted to increase defense expenditures, a 20% shift form 1974, when only 12% favored increased defense spending. Similarly, whereas 32% of the public thought defense spending was too high in 1974, only 16% thought it was too high in 1978. Indeed, support for defense spending in 1978 was slightly higher than it was in 1960, a period when the United States led an activist role on the world stage.

One partial explanation is suggested by the discrepancy in responses to two closely related questions. As noted earlier, support for playing an "active part in world affairs" declined. But the percentage of those who felt that the United States should play a more important and powerful role as a "world leader" increased from 33% in 1974 to 47% in 1978.

Public sentiment for increasing the defense budget was not fully shared by opinion leaders. Though relatively the same proportion of leaders as of public (31% compared to 32%) favored increasing the defense budget, a substantially higher percentage (28% to 16% favored cutting it back. Similarly, a smaller percentage of the leaders (39%) than the public (56%) felt that the United States was falling behind the Soviet Union in power and influence. That contrasts with the greater willingness of the leadership group than of the public to support the use of United States troops in selected situations.

Among the leaders, an overwhelming majority (92%) favored a United States troop commitment if Soviet armies invaded Western Europe; a large majority (77%) favored such action if the Soviet Union invaded West Berlin or if Japan were invaded by the Soviet Union (81%). This compares with 54% public support of arms in the case of Soviet troops invading Western Europe, 48% in the case of West Berlin, and 42% if Japan were invaded. Though the gap between popular support and leadership support on this question remained large, it should be noted that public support for the use of United States troops in these situations has increased. In the case of Soviet attack on Western Europe, it rose from 39% in 1974 to 54% in 1978, and support for West Berlin rose from 34% to 48%. A similar increase in support of troop commitments occurred on the part of leaders. Support for troop commitment if Western Europe were invaded increased from 77% in 1974 to 92% in 1978; on the question of West Berlin, an increase from 55% to 77% occurred.

The conclusion suggested here is that although the number of places where the American public and their leaders are prepared to support the commitment of United States troops is limited, willingness to take action in those select, high-priority areas is greater among the leadership and the public than it was four years ago.

SOVIET THREAT

The 1978 Council data suggested that the principal reason for increased support of both defense spending and willingness to commit troops in selected areas was the perceived growing military threat of the Soviet Union. Of those favoring an increase in spending, 69% believed the United States was falling behind the Soviet Union. A clear majority of the public (56%) shared that view. Thirty percent of the public regarded this development with "great concern." When the public was asked if they would favor a cutback in defense spending if that would *not* mean falling behind the Soviet Union, the percentage favoring a cutback increased from 16% to 59%.

Although a smaller percentage of opinion leaders than of the public believed the United States was falling behind the Soviet Union, a substantial 64% of them expressed "great concern" about this development. At the same time that there was fear over growing Soviet military power there remained strong support for greater cooperation with the Soviet Union.

There was strong support for limiting nuclear weapons, for undertaking joint projects to solve energy problems, and even for banning *all* nuclear weapons. Only a minority of the public and a smaller minority of the leaders favored restricting trade; even smaller numbers wanted to prohibit exchange of scientists with the Soviet Union. Public euphoria about detente evaporated, but there remained solid support for specific aspects of the detente policy developed in the early 1970s.

NATO

Consistent with greater concern about the power of the Soviet Union, there was an increase in support for the principal U.S. defense alliance, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Among the public, there was a 5% increase in the number of those who wanted to "increase the NATO commitment," an 8% increase among those who want to "keep the commitment what it is," and a 4% drop in the number of those wanting to "decrease the commitment." Among leaders, the shift over a four-year period in favor of strong support for NATO was even sharper. Those who believed that we should "increase our commitment" to NATO rose from 5% in 1974 to 21% in 1978; those who would "keep the commitment as it is" increased slightly from 62% to 65%; and those who would "decrease our commitment" to NATO dropped from 29% in 1974 to 12% in 1978. Among the leaders, the portion with the highest percentage favoring an "increase in commitment" were members of the United States Congress, 38% favoring an increase.

Thus, increasing support for NATO once again contrasts with the general wariness of becoming militarily involved overseas. But it squares with the general thrust of this report, which suggests that despite the desire to curtail commitments in certain parts of the world, the American people are prepared to support greater efforts in defense of American interests in certain high-priority areas of the world. That includes defending Western Europe in the face of the perceived growing Soviet military buildup. In concentrating the proposed increase in defense spending on strengthening United States forces in NATO, President Carter has read correctly the mood of the American people.

WHO SHAPES FOREIGN POLICY

In the late autumn of 1974, Henry Kissinger still was viewed as the dominant figure in United States foreign policy. Seventy percent of the public and 97% of the leaders regarded the secretary of state as a "very important" factor in shaping foreign policy, compared to 49% of the public and 51% of the leaders who so regarded President Ford. By the autumn of 1978 this had changed perceptibly, and President Carter was regarded as having "a very important influence" on foreign policy by 72% of the public and 94% of the leaders. The secretary of state was considered very important by 61% of the public and 63% of the leaders.

In 1974, 34% of the public viewed Henry Kissinger as doing an excellent job as secretary of state, with 41% rating him as pretty good, 16% as only fair, and 3% as poor. In 1978 Secretary Cyrus Vance received an excellent rating by 11%, pretty good by 43%, fair by 27%, and poor by 3%.

In one of the noticeable changes from 1974, Congress was perceived today to have a more influential role in shaping foreign policy, playing what the public regards as its proper role. From 1974 to 1978 there was an increase from 39% to 45% of those who felt Congress played a "very important role" in American foreign policy. In the present survey, 45% of the leaders believed Congress was "very important" in foreign policy. When asked what role various institutions *should* play, there was a decline of 5% (from 48% to 43%) among those who believed that Congress should have a more important role and a decline from 38% to 29% among those who thought Congress played too weak a role.

Significant portions of the public believed that public opinion should play a more importent role (62%), the president should (44%), the secretary of state should (35%), and the State Department as a whole should (35%). The percentages were similar to those of 1974. Although still having only minority support, there was a 10% increase in public support for a larger role for the military, up from 19% to 29% in 1978.

Finally, the American public continued to rely heavily on the presidency and on television news as its primary sources of information on foreign policy issues. An increase of 6% of the public (from 26% to 32%) regarded the president as a "very reliable" source of information on foreign policy, followed by television news (35% in 1974 and 30% in 1978). Newspapers were regarded as a "very reliable source" by 26% of the people, compared to 27% in 1974. The State Department experienced a sharp drop among those listing it as a "very reliable" source of information (36% in 1974 to 16% in 1978).

CONCLUSION

The evidence from the 1978 survey revealed a heightened sense of self-interest permeating the foreign policy concerns of the American public. This seemed to be motivated by increased economic and military insecurity, as evidenced by the public's anxiety over the value of the dollar and Soviet military power.

Concern with self-interest should not be confused with isolationism. The 1978 data showed quite clearly that Americans perceived this country's vital interests in many parts of the world but were, nevertheless, highly selective about direct involvement. Given that fact, certain froms of international involvement were judged mainly in terms of self-interest. Indeed, withdrawal from world responsibility obviously would work against self-interest. It appeared from this survey that the public was increasingly sensitive to the distinction between those forms of international involvement, whether economic or military, that are in our self-interest and those that are not. Since opinion leaders have a much broader definition of America's self-interest, they tended to be more favorable than the general public toward all forms of international involvement.

If growing self-interest was one theme emerging from the evidence, the sense of selectivity in making commitments was even stronger. The public was wary of direct involvement of the kind that characterized United States policy in the 1960s. Yet willingness to strenghten our nation's capacity to defend high-priority commitments has increased since 1974.

I. Priority of Foreign Policy

An essential preliminary step in an analysis of public and opinion-leader attitudes toward foreign policy issues is to begin by asking what degree of importance the American public and their leaders give to foreign affairs. How is foreign policy perceived in comparison with other subjects? How is it viewed in relation to domestic issues, especially domestic economic issues? Do people follow foreign policy news closely in the media? Do they think that events overseas have a direct bearing on their own lives? These are the issues addressed in the opening chapter in order to ascertain where foreign affairs fits into the consideration of public issues generally.

ATTENTIVENESS TO FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Many commentators have described the 1970s as quiescent and inward-looking, a time when Americans have sought stability and reassurance after the tumultuous conflicts of the 1960s. The end of the Vietnam War, our most divisive military conflict since the Civil War, when coupled with serious economic dislocations has focused attention on affairs closer to home.

In the 1974 Chicago Council on Foreign Relations survey, 35% of the respondents said they were "very interested" in "reading articles relating to news about other countries," while 20% said they were "hardly interested at all." In 1978 the percentage of "very interested" had fallen to 26%, with 27% now "hardly interested at all." (See Figure I-1) A somewhat higher proportion in both years said they were "very interested in news about the relations of the United States with other countries," but this figure also declined from 50% to 44% between 1974 and 1978.

This decline of interest in foreign affairs seems to coincide with a broader decline of interest in *all* public affairs. As Fig. I-1 also indicates, the percentage "very interested in national news" also fell slightly, from 56% in 1974 to 48% in 1978, just as the number who claimed to be "very interested in news about your state," dropped from 47% to 41%. Only interest in local news stayed about the same.

The ordering of interest was the same in both surveys, with the public claiming most interest in local news, followed by national, and then "news about the relations of the United States with other countries." Both in 1974 and 1978 "news about other countries" was of least interest to the public. In the two areas relating to foreign affairs, the proportions "very interested" averaged a 9% decline, with a 6% increase in the numbers "hardly interested at all."

It is clear that the degree of interest felt by the public in foreign and domestic affairs declined in the four-year interval, but that does not necessarily mean there was less interest in specific issues. The earlier survey asked respondents how closely they had followed each of 11 recent events. The most-followed events in 1974 were the World Food Conference (31% claimed to have followed it "very closely"), problems in the Middle East (29%), and Henry Kissinger's trip to China (28%). In the 1978 survey the two most widely followed foreign policy events were "problems in the Middle East" (32% compared to 29% in 1974) and "Senate debate on the ratification of the Panama Canal Treaty" (31%).

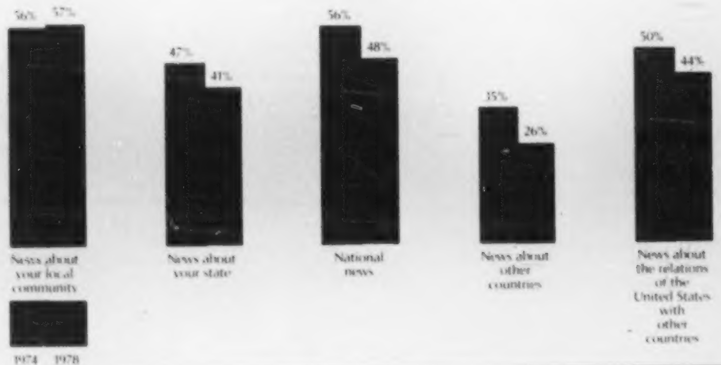
Thus, there is no evidence of a significant decline of interest in specific foreign policy events between 1974 and 1978. Moreover, in 1978 and contrary to what one might have expected from the high level of interest indicated in domestic news, the two domestic events followed most closely (wage-price guidelines and the recent Congressional elections) did not elicit a noticeably higher level of public attention, with 38% and 31%, respectively.

To say that a large majority of the American public does not find foreign affairs interesting is of course not to say that every member of the public finds foreign affairs uninteresting. There is a segment of the American public that finds foreign affairs interesting, follows specific events fairly closely, and knows something about the issues. We have chosen to call these people the "attentive public." Defined by an additive index of responses to specific questions, approximately 21% of the Amer-

FIGURE I-1 (The Public)
INTEREST IN PUBLIC AFFAIRS, 1974 & 1978

"When you pick up a newspaper these days, how interested are you in reading articles relating to news about the following — very interested, somewhat interested, or hardly interested at all?"

PERCENT "VERY INTERESTED"



ican public is attentive to foreign affairs.* Occasionally in this report we will compare the attentive segment of the public with the leaders and their less attentive fellow citizens.

FOREIGN POLICY AND THE NATIONAL AGENDA

The predominance of economic issues, so striking in the 1974 survey, can be seen once more in the responses given to an open-ended question asked in 1974 and 1978: "What do you feel are the two or three biggest problems facing the country today that you would like to see the federal government do something about?" Table I-1 shows the problems most frequently mentioned by the public and by the leaders. Economic problems clearly predominated in both surveys. In 1978 they were mentioned by 78% of the public and 90% of the leaders as the most important problems facing the country that the federal government should do something about. While unemployment diminished somewhat as a public concern between 1974 and 1978, inflation increased in importance to the point where it now overshadows all other problems. Fully two-thirds of the public named inflation as a major problem in 1978 (compared to 56% in 1974) and 85% of the leaders concurred. There is no question that inflation is the principal item on the public agenda.

In apparent contradiction to the earlier discussion of attention to news, concern over foreign policy, which was low in 1974, might have increased slightly in 1978. (Differences in coding schemes prevent a definite answer.) In the latest survey 22% of the public mentioned problems related to foreign policy as major issues facing the country, up from 13% in 1974. The attentive public gave foreign policy a higher priority than did the non-attentive public and was more likely to cite a foreign policy issue among major problems (32% did so, compared with 13% of the non-attentive public).

For the public as a whole, two foreign policy issues have increased in attention. International economic problems and the U.S. balance of payments (excessive imports) were mentioned by 4% of the public and 10% of the leaders in 1978, up from 1% and 8%, respectively, in 1974. Concern over national defense and U.S. military security has increased substantially, particularly at the leader level. Fewer than 1% of the public mentioned national defense in 1974; today, 5% mentioned this issue. Among leaders, concern over national defense rose from 2% to 21%, the sharpest rate of increase for any issue.

Thus inflation clearly has the highest priority on the political agenda, with energy and unemployment continuing to be of concern to significant numbers of people. The issues of taxes and government spending also have become prominent concerns since 1974. While the latter two have gained most conspicuously among the public at large, national defense is the issue that has increased the most at the leadership level.

PRIORITIES AMONG GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS

Another way to assess the relative priority of foreign policy is by asking what government programs the public would like to see expanded, cut back or kept the same. Respondents in the 1978 survey were asked

TABLE I-1. Most important problems

"What do you feel are the two or three biggest problems facing the country today that you would like to see the government do something about?"

	—1978—	
	Public	Leaders
ECONOMY	78%	90%
Inflation	67	85
Unemployment	19	23
Taxes	10	6
ENERGY	[illegible]	[illegible]
GOVERNMENT	[illegible]	[illegible]
Big government	6	10
Government spending	9	13
Corruption	[illegible]	[illegible]
FOREIGN POLICY	22%	[illegible]
World peace	3	[illegible]
Middle East	1	4
Too much foreign aid	5	[illegible]
National defense	5	21
International economy, balance of payments	4	10
U.S. foreign policy	[illegible]	[illegible]
SOCIAL PROBLEMS	[illegible]	[illegible]
Crime	[illegible]	[illegible]
Drug abuse	3	1
Welfare abuse	8	2
Racial problems	3	[illegible]
Environment	2	[illegible]
Immorality	2	[illegible]
Labor relations	1	1
Abortion	[illegible]	[illegible]
SOCIAL WELFARE	[illegible]	[illegible]
Health insurance	5	[illegible]
Elderly	4	[illegible]
Education	4	[illegible]
Poverty	3	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

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*Methodologically, the "attentive public" is defined by an additive index of responses to how closely the respondent followed five specific issues and how interested he was in reading articles about two general topics. The issues were: Cuban military activities in Africa, problems in the Middle East, SALT talks, debate on the Panama Canal Treaty, and Congressional debates on foreign aid. The articles involved: news about other countries and news about relations of the United States with other countries. Those who said they followed a specific item "very closely" or who were "very interested" in a topic were given a score of 2 for that question. Those who followed the event "somewhat closely" or who were "somewhat interested" in the article were given a value of 1. And those who followed specific events "not very closely" or who were "hardly interested" in the topic or who were not sure of their attentiveness or interest were assigned a value of 0. The scale is a sum of the values assigned to a respondent for all seven questions. Those with scores between 10 and 14 were considered "attentive," and those with scores of 4 or below were "non-attentive."

about three foreign policy programs (defense spending and economic and military aid to other nations) and four domestic programs (aid to education, highway expenditures, farm subsidies, and welfare). An index of support was created by subtracting the percentage who wanted a program cut back from the percentage who wanted to expand it. Thus, a positive score indicates net public support for expansion of a program; a negative score indicates a net public desire to cut back; and zero means equally balanced sentiment in both directions. Support for each program in both 1974 and 1978 is shown in Figure I-2.

Each program had about the same level of support in both surveys, with one important exception: defense spending. In both surveys a majority supported expanding aid to education, with only 8% in each believing that aid to education should be cut back. Two other domestic programs, highway expenditures and farm subsidies, were given slightly favorable ratings. The most unpopular domestic program was "welfare and relief," which received net unfavorable ratings in both surveys. At the bottom of the list both times were foreign economic aid and foreign military aid. Majorities in 1974 and 1978 felt that economic aid to other nations should be cut back, while about two-thirds of both samples favored a cut back in military aid.

If one compares the public's support for these programs in 1974 and 1978, it is difficult to detect the effects of the widely publicized tax revolt. Only one program—welfare and relief—fell substantially in support between those years. The percentage of public that wanted to expand "welfare and relief programs" declined from 30% in 1974 to 18% in 1978 while sentiment for cutting back welfare rose from 34% in 1974 to 48% (almost a majority) in 1978.

While aid to education declined marginally in popularity from 1974 to 1978, a majority continued to support expansion. The two programs at the bottom of the list, economic and military aid, both massively unpopular in 1974, gained a little support in 1978; in the latest survey the proportion of the public that wanted to cut back foreign aid programs was 5-6% smaller than in 1974. Despite this slight improvement, however, it must be stressed that foreign aid remained very unpopular in 1978.

The one program that shifted from net unfavorable in 1974 to net favorable in 1978 was defense spending. From 1974 to 1978 a 20% shift occurred, with public support for defense spending increasing from 14% to 34%. At the same time, sentiment for cutting back defense spending declined from 42% in 1974 to 24% in 1978. The attentive public is 51% in favor of expanding defense spending, compared to 24% of the non-attentive public.

The result in defense spending is consistent with other trend evidence, to be discussed later in this report, that shows increasing public support for defense spending since 1972. This trend in part reflects growing insecurity on the part of the public over the military balance between the United States and the Soviet Union, a point developed and expanded elsewhere in the report. The trend also might reflect a "wearing off" of the effects of the Vietnam War, a massively unpopular conflict that depressed public support for defense spending to unusually low levels.

According to the 1978 survey, about one-third of the public now favors an increase in defense spending, about one-third feels that the level of defense spending should be kept about the same, and about one-quarter favors a decrease. Although these figures are a far cry from the enormous hostility to defense spending registered at the height of the Vietnam War, there still is no evidence that a majority of the public favors a larger defense budget.

As indicated in Figure I-2, the public shares a diversity of opinion toward domestic programs, ranging from the very popular aid to education to the very unpopular welfare. There is also diversity regarding foreign policy, from the moderately popular defense spending to the extremely unpopular foreign aid. The general principle underlying the responses in Figure I-2 might be construed as self-interest. Americans tend to favor programs that are seen to be of direct benefit to themselves. Almost all Americans benefit from aid to education and from highway expenditures, the most popular programs. Most Americans do not benefit from farm subsidies and welfare, the least popular domestic programs.

Defense spending is a foreign policy program that benefits Americans both directly (jobs) and indirectly (security), and it is relatively popular. Foreign economic and military aid is not seen as providing direct or tangible benefits to most Americans, so such aid is extremely unpopular. To the extent that most foreign policy programs tend to involve little apparent direct benefit to most Americans, one would expect foreign policy programs to be less popular.

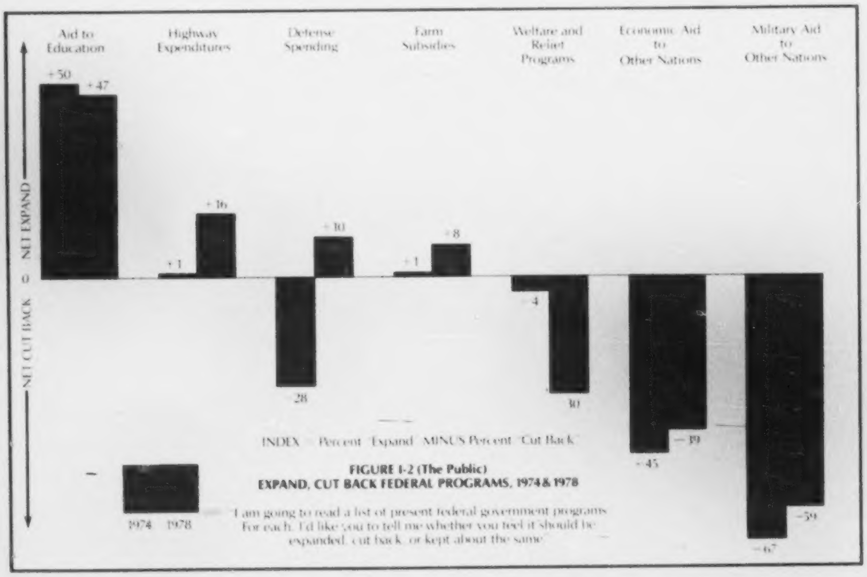

FIGURE I-2 (The Public)
EXPAND, CUT BACK FEDERAL PROGRAMS, 1974 & 1978

"I am going to read a list of present federal government programs. For each, I'd like you to tell me whether you feel it should be expanded, cut back, or kept about the same."

II. Foreign Policy Goals

The interest of Americans in foreign affairs is clearly subsidiary to their dominant interest in domestic economic matters, as discussed in the previous chapter. But a lower priority for foreign policy is far from a rejection of the subject. The American public, according to our analysis, does not advocate a withdrawal from world affairs despite its stronger concern with domestic matters.

CAUTIOUS INVOLVEMENT

A majority of the American public (59%) continued to think that the United States should "take an active part in world affairs," although the size of the majority has decreased somewhat during the last several years. (See Table II-1)

This contrasts with the response to the question about the role the United States should play in the world ten years from now. A majority of the public responded that we should play at least as important and powerful a role as we do today—9% higher than the number that felt that way in 1974.

This activist role is not a messianic one nor does it endorse military activities of the sort that typified much of United States foreign policy in the 1950s and 1960s. The use of United States troops is supported infrequently (a topic discussed in detail in Chapter V). Even though the public has grown increasingly supportive during the last four years of a stronger military posture, it much prefers the role of negotiator to that of military policeman.

PROTECTING UNITED STATES INTERESTS

In 1974 and again in 1978 the United States public and foreign policy leaders were shown a list of possible foreign policy goals and asked whether they thought that each "should be a very important foreign policy goal of the United States, a somewhat important foreign policy goal, or not an important goal at all." While exact comparisons between the two years cannot be made because of changes in the wording of several goals, it seems fair to conclude that United States foreign policy goals expressed by the public and leaders mirrored their primary concern about domestic matters.

Upward of 75% of the public regarded "keeping up the value of the dollar,"* "securing adequate supplies of energy," and "protecting the jobs of American workers" as very important foreign policy goals. Between 59% and 64% regarded "worldwide arms control," "combating world hunger," and "containing Communism" as very important goals, and between 45% and 50% thought that "defending our allies' security," "protecting the interest of American business abroad," and "strengthening the United Nations" were very important. Several other goals were rated very important by no more than 39% of the population. (See Table II-2)

There is a tendency for the American public to turn inward when assessing United States foreign policy goals, which are seen in many cases as means to domestic purposes rather than simply as international policy ends in themselves. As in 1974, traditional Cold War aims were of secondary importance, and the "altruistic" ambitions of assisting weaker nations and promoting human rights, while supported by pluralities of the public, were rated considerably below all other concerns.

Although United States leaders and the attentive segment of the public were more inclined than the entire public to think that the United States "should take an active part in world affairs" and that the nation should play at least as important and powerful a role ten years from now as it does today, the order given to specific foreign policy goals corresponded closely to the way the public ranked these. The leaders placed energy supplies, arms control, allies' security, and the value of the dollar at the top of their list of goals. Combating world hunger, improving the standard of living in less developed countries, containing Communism, and promoting and defending human rights were seen as relatively less important. Lower still in importance were the purposes of protecting American jobs, defending weaker nations against aggression, protection the interest of American business abroad, strengthening the United Nations, and helping to bring a democratic form of government to other nations.

The leaders differed substantially from the public in only two goals: they were considerably less enthusiastic about "protecting the jobs of American workers" and considerably more likely to endorse the goal of "defending our allies' security." Table II-2 makes this point. This relationship generally held for the attentive and

TABLE II-1. Involvement in world affairs—The Public

"Do you think it will be best for the future of the country if we take an active part in world affairs or if we stay out of world affairs."

[illegible]

*While support for the dollar is an international issue of extreme importance, we have reason to think the public equates this goal with combating inflation as well as providing support for the dollar on foreign exchange markets. 80% of those who thought that "keeping up the value of the dollar" was a very important foreign policy goal also thought that the state of the economy was one of the biggest problems facing the United States.

non-attentive publics: the attentive public was less strongly attached to the theme of protecting jobs (73% to 79%) and more in favor of defending our allies' security (67% to 40%). Cold War aims received relatively less support and, as with the public, promoting and defending human rights was not of primary importance for the leaders. The opinion leader group was, however, more likely to support human rights in principle *and* in practice than was the public.

United States leadership and the attentive public were especially receptive to that part of detente that promotes greater exchange and trade among ourselves and the two major communist nations. Ninety-four percent and 81%, respectively, thought that trade with the People's Republic of China should be expanded, and in all instances, except the sale of United States computers, large majorities favored United States-Soviet interchange.

FOREIGN POLICY PROBLEMS

In addition to the "most important problems" question discussed in Chapter I, the 1974 and 1978 surveys asked respondents to name "the two or three biggest *foreign policy* problems facing the United States today that you would like to see the federal government do something about." The impact of the 1974 recession weighed heavily in the answers of that year; one out of three respondents thought the United States should reduce foreign aid. "Stop giving money away to other countries and do more about our economic problems here at home" was a typical reply. With the economic recovery since 1974, this attitude has declined somewhat in intensity. In the 1978 survey, reducing foreign aid was the second most frequently mentioned foreign policy problem, this time by 18% of the public. (See Table II-3)

The foreign policy issues of most public concern in the latest survey were those of the Middle East and United States-Soviet relations. The Middle East was most frequently mentioned by both the public and the leaders. Concern about this area has increased since 1974, reflecting no doubt the diplomatic activity in that area stemming from President Sadat's dramatic visit to Jerusalem in November, 1977, and culminating in the Camp David Summit of September, 1978, and the frantic (and futile) effort to produce a peace treaty by December, just at the time the interviews were being conducted for this survey. Yet the Middle East still was mentioned by only one-fifth of the public and one-half of the leaders.

The foreign policy issue that increased most noticeably in salience, particularly at the leader level, was relations with the Soviet Union. Almost half of the leaders in the 1978 survey mentioned United States-Soviet relations as a major issue, a figure that is about the same as their level of concern over the Middle East. While concern about relations with the Soviet Union increased from 12% to 46% among the leaders between 1974 and 1978, concern over this issue among the mass public, imperceptible in 1974, reached 13% in 1978. This 13% breaks down to 27% among the attentive and 7% among the non-attentive public. There was also an increase in the percentages of leaders and of the public who mentioned "loss of respect for the United States," the need for a "stronger United States foreign policy," and "national defense." These results, which are put in context in Table I-1, indicate concern over military security and the strategic balance between the United

TABLE II-2. Foreign policy goals for the United States—1978

"I am going to read a list of possible foreign policy goals that the United States might have. For each one please say whether you think that should be a very important foreign policy goal, a somewhat important foreign policy goal, or not an important goal at all."

	Very Important		Somewhat Important		Not Important		Not Sure	
	Public	Leaders	Public	Leaders	Public	Leaders	Public	Leaders
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
3. Protecting jobs of American workers	78	34	16	57	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

States and the Soviet Union, particularly among opinion leaders.

International economic problems also increased somewhat in salience between 1974 and 1978; larger percentages of the public and of the leaders in 1978 mentioned balance of trade problems and the decline of the dollar as major foreign policy concerns. The foreign policy issue that declined most notably in prominence was the oil problem. It is not surprising that public concern over oil diminished with the passing of the 1974 gasoline crisis. It is perhaps surprising, however, that leadership concern fell as sharply. Mention of the oil problem decreased from 41% of the leaders in 1974 to only 7% in 1978.

The difference between public opinion and leadership opinion is especially pronounced in Table II-3. As in Table I-1, leaders tended to mention a great many more foreign policy problems than did the public at large. The foreign policy issues mentioned notably more often by the public were those with an isolationist tinge—reducing foreign aid and staying out of other countries' affairs. The public's concern tended to be with those issues that directly affected the United States or in which the United States was directly involved, e.g., the Middle East negotiations, foreign aid, relations with the Soviet Union, the United States balance of trade. Leaders showed more awareness of Third World problems and issues somewhat removed from the immediate and tangible interests of the average American. Concern over the Third World was quite low among the mass public, whether the issue involved Africa, Latin America, China, or Cuba.

The issues and areas (such as food, population, environment, international organizations) that were closely identified with the new International Economic Order at the beginning of the Carter Administration did not fare well. Only 4% of the American public listed United States relations with Africa as an important foreign policy focus. Support for foreign aid, both military and economic, continued to decline.

The public evinces little interest in "ideological" issues; only 2% mentioned "Communism" (as distinct from the Soviet Union) as a major foreign policy issue, and only 1% of the public spontaneously mentioned human rights, one of the major themes of the Carter Administration's foreign policy. Finally, it is worth pointing out that the Panama Canal issue had declined to insignificance by December, 1978, being mentioned by only 1% of the public and of the leaders.

We conclude this description of foreign policy goals by turning our attention to two foreign policy goals that deserve special attention because of the central role each has played in justifying a great deal of post-World War II United States foreign policy—human rights and containment of Communism.

TABLE II-3. Major foreign policy problems

"What are the two or three biggest foreign policy problems facing the U.S. today?"

	Public %	Leaders %
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

HUMAN RIGHTS

Recently, there has been a great deal of emphasis on human rights in international affairs, with the signing of the Helsinki accords in 1976 and the emphasis given the theme by President Carter since taking office in early 1977. There continues to be comparatively strong popular support for human rights in the abstract, with 67% of the public agreeing that the United States should put pressure on countries that systematically violate human rights; only 25% were opposed. That compares with 78% of the leadership favoring the exertion of greater pressure, and 18% opposed.

When Jimmy Carter campaigned for the presidency in 1976, he vowed to replace the *realpolitik* balance-of-power foreign policy, which had been shaped by Henry Kissinger, with a new policy that reflected the values and traditions of the American people. Throughout his presidential campaign, he and his principal advisers decried the over-emphasis on great power politics and relations with adversaries, promising to bring a new priority to relations with friends and democratic values.

Yet the Carter Administration's emphasis on exporting American values did not fare well. The priority given to extending democracy was low. While support for human rights was voiced in the abstract, it received a low priority when applied to specific situations. Neither of these compared with the importance attached to defending the value of the American dollar or protecting the jobs of United States workers. Of the list containing 13 foreign policy goals, promoting and defending human rights was considered tenth most important by the public and eighth by the leadership group. When asked to name important foreign policy problems, only 1% of the public mentioned human rights.

Second, the current level of support for human rights activism predates the emphasis placed upon the issue by the Carter Administration. In the previous 1974 survey, 68% of the public favored the principle, with 21% opposed. It can be inferred that President Carter's emphasis on human rights has not had a major impact on public attitudes in the United States.

Third, the endorsement of human rights as an element in United States foreign policy was supported more strongly in principle than in practice. When placed in the context of more specific circumstances requiring direct United States involvement, support faded. Only 40% of the public thought that the United States "should take a more active role in opposing the policy of apartheid—that is, racial separation—in South Africa," and 50% agreed that "how the Soviet Union handles the treatment of the Jews or other minority groups is a matter of internal Soviet politics and none of our business." Only 41% agreed with this statement on Soviet minorities in 1974. The leadership group was more in favor of human rights implementation in these terms: 66% thought we should be more active in opposing apartheid (29% opposed), and 30% thought we should stay out of Soviet minority affairs (77% opposed). Similarly, when asked if they would approve or disapprove the efforts of governments in Italy, Argentina, and West Germany to limit the civil liberties of their people in attempting to stop terrorism, 59% of the public felt that that was frequently or sometimes justified, and only 25% felt it was rarely or never justifiable.

CONTAINMENT OF COMMUNISM AND DETENTE

The "containment of communism" has lost considerable power as a symbol in American foreign policy. Where this theme once was evoked to justify many U.S. foreign and domestic policies after World War II, its edge now has dulled, its centrality replaced by "detente." As a foreign policy goal, "exchange" and "dialogue" between the United States and the communist world have replaced "containment." Sixty-four percent of the public thought that the United States should try to expand trade and technical exchanges with the People's Republic of China, 68% favored joint efforts with the Soviet Union to solve energy problems, 71% favored an agreement between the United States and the U.S.S.R. to limit nuclear weapons on both sides, and 62% favored an agreement that would *ban all* nuclear weapons. A majority (54%) opposed prohibiting the exchange of scientists between the United States and the Soviet Union, and a plurality (47%) opposed restricting United States-Soviet trade.

The only opposition to improved United States-Soviet exchange and trade was in the sensitive area of the sale of United States computers to the Soviet Union (51% favored a limitation). United States leaders were even more enthusiastic about expanded relationships with the Soviet Union (and, conversely, opposed to restrictions), but here the order of preferences mirrored those of the public. (See Table II-4)

In summary, there is clear support for an active international role for the United States. That holds true for public and for the leaders. A diversity of foreign policy concerns were expressed. There was growing support for increased defense spending. Economic concerns were prominent although the points of greatest worry had shifted.

TABLE II-4. Relationships with the Soviet Union—1978

"Relations between the Soviet Union and the United States have been the subject of disagreement for some time. Please tell me if you would favor or oppose the following types of relationships with the Soviet Union."

	[illegible]	
	Public	Leaders
Signing another arms agreement to limit some nuclear weapons on both sides	[illegible]	[illegible]
Undertaking joint efforts with the Soviet Union to solve energy problems	[illegible]	[illegible]
Signing an agreement to ban all nuclear weapons on both sides	[illegible]	[illegible]
Limiting the sales of advanced U.S. computers to the Soviet Union	[illegible]	[illegible]
Restricting U.S.-Soviet trade	[illegible]	[illegible]
Prohibiting the exchange of scientists between the U.S. and [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

III. Political Relationships and Commitments Abroad

Two years after President Carter took office, the American people and their leaders continued to be preoccupied with what they perceived to be the diminishing position of the United States as the preeminent global power, attributing this change above all to the declining value of the dollar and secondly to the growing military power of the Soviet Union. On the security side, the Soviet Union replaced Vietnam as the central preoccupation in American foreign policy. But the preoccupation with the growing military and political influence of the Soviet Union did not mean expectations of a return to the Cold War. Although the containment of Communism remained an important goal of American foreign policy, it clearly had diminished in priority compared to the Cold War years in the 1950s and 1960s.

Both the public and the leaders displayed an ambivalent attitude toward the role of Communism and communist governments in the world today. Though fearful about the consequences of increasing Soviet military power, they were less concerned about the role of a communist government in China or the possible coming to power through elections of communist governments in Western Europe. This ambivalence extended to the Soviet Union as well. To assuage their fears of growing Soviet military power, they were prepared to increase support for the defense budget in general and expenditures on NATO in particular. Both public and leaders also displayed a greater willingness to commit troops in defense of selected allied countries than was the case four years ago. At the same time, they favored cooperative relationships with the Soviet Union in the fields of science, trade and commerce, and arms control. The fear of a return to isolationism, prominent four years ago, remained as unfounded in 1978 as it was in 1975.

Post-Vietnam foreign policy was not characterized by a desire to remove the United States from participation in world affairs. By a margin of 59% to 29% the American people believed we should continue to take an active part in world affairs. Two-thirds think today, as they did in 1974, that "the United States has generally been a force for good" in its foreign policy since World War II, with only 9% regarding it as a force for evil. Among the leadership, 97% believed the United States should continue to play an active part in world affairs, and 87% believed the United States has been a force for good.

SOVIET UNION AND WORLD COMMUNISM

As noted above, the attitude of both the public and leaders toward the Soviet Union was marked by substantial ambivalence. There was concern about the relative power position of the United States vis-a-vis the Soviet Union: 56% of the public and 39% of the leaders believed we were falling behind the Soviet Union in power and influence. Of the 56% of the public who believed this, thirty viewed the situation with "great concern" and twenty-two with "concern." Of the 56%, 26% would be willing to pay more taxes in order to "make the United States equal militarily with the Soviet Union," and 25% would not be willing to pay higher taxes. Of the 39% of the leaders who believed the United States was falling behind the Soviet Union, 64% expressed "great concern" over this, and 72% were willing to pay more taxes to make the United States equal militarily.

At the same time, there was substantial support for cooperative endeavors with the Soviets. Sixty-eight percent of the public and 90% of the leaders favored "undertaking joint efforts with the Soviet Union to solve energy problems"; 54% of the public and 88% of the leaders opposed any prohibition on the exchange of U.S. and Soviet scientists; 71% of the public and 92% of the leaders favored signing an arms agreement to limit some nuclear weapons on both sides. The ambivalence about the Soviet Union was paralleled by ambivalence about Communism. Americans did not automatically equate communist governments with a threat to the United States. Respondents were asked to measure the degree of threat to the United States if communists came to power through peaceful elections in each of five countries: Chile, France, Iran, Italy, and Mexico. Table III-1 reveals the results. The striking factor on both levels is the variability of the responses: clearly people responded to different perceptions of political-strategic situations involving different nations and not to simple, uniform anti-Communism. In addition, in the case of three of the countries—two of them NATO allies— the percentages viewing a communist victory as a "great threat" were comparatively small.

TABLE III-1. Level of threat to U.S. created by communist electoral victories—1978

"I am going to read a list of countries. For each, tell me how much of a threat it would be if the communists came to power in that country through peaceful elections."

[illegible]

TABLE III-2. Should CIA work inside other countries

"*In general, do you feel that the CIA should or should not work inside other countries to try to strengthen those elements that serve the interest of the U.S. and to weaken those forces that work against the interests of the U.S.?*"

	Public		Leaders	
	1974	1978	1974	1978
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

TABLE III-3. Perceptions of U.S. vital interests—1978

"*Many people believe that the United States has a vital interest in certain areas of the world and not in other areas. That is, certain countries of the world are important to the U.S. for political, economic, or security reasons. I am going to read a list of countries. For each, tell me whether you feel the U.S. does or does not have a vital interest in that country.*"

	Does		Does Not		Don't Know	
	Public	Leaders	Public	Leaders	Public	Leaders
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	—
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	—
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	1%
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

On the other hand, the total viewing a communist victory as a threat (either "great" or "somewhat") was substantial (Italy, 58%; France, 67%). It also should be noted that the question was phrased in a way ("through peaceful elections") that did not encourage a negative reponse. In line with this point, 60% of the public continued to believe that containing Communism was a very important foreign policy goal, an increase of 6% over 1974, while 10% believed it was not important, a drop of 3%. Forty-five percent of the leaders ranked containing Communism as a very important foreign policy goal, with 8% saying "not important" indicating that containing Communism is considered to be more important among the public than among the leaders. Thus, the preoccupation with the Soviet Union coexisted with a more ambivalent attitude toward Communism generally.

The Council survey data indicated that the American people continued to be skeptical about military means to accomplish foreign policy goals. Other forms of pressure were more acceptable than military. For example, there was a growing willingness to use covert political means. When asked whether the CIA should work inside other countries to strengthen those elements that serve the interest of the United States, 59% believed the CIA should do so (compared with 43% in 1974) and 21% were opposed (compared to 26% four years ago). Among leaders, 59% were in favor of the above, with 35% opposed—an exact reversal of their views four years ago. (See Table III-2.) The reluctance to support covert action, which was evident after Vietnam, seems to be waning.

AMERICANS VIEW THE WORLD: VITAL INTERESTS

In the 1978 survey both the public and the leaders were asked whether or not they felt the United States had a vital interest in each of 24 countries.* Vital interest was defined in the following terms: "Many people believe that the United States has a vital interest in certain areas of the world and not in other areas. That is, certain countries of the world are important to the U.S. for political, economic, or security reasons." Table III-3 shows the percentage of each group that felt the U.S. had a vital interest in the particular country.

Most striking is the wide variety of vital interests perceived by both the public and the leaders. A majority of *both* samples said that the U.S. has a vital interest in 17 of the 24 countries on the list. The countries at the top of the list were felt to be vital by more than 90% of the leaders and 60% of the public. Those countries included the major industrial powers (West Germany, Great Britain, and Japan), the major communist powers (Soviet Union and China), important Middle East oil producers (Saudi Arabia and Iran), a border country (Canada), and Egypt and Israel, where the United States has important diplomatic commitments. Another European power, France, and another border country, Mexico, fell just on the margin of the category of strongest interest. These data demonstrate that most Americans perceived a diverse network of interests and commitments tying the United States to the rest of the world.

Between half and two-thirds of both the public and the leaders perceived a vital interest in four other countries: South Korea and Taiwan, where we have longstanding military commitments; Cuba (geographic proximity); and South Africa (economic ties). America's vital interest in these four countries might be considered arguable. In the case of Taiwan, it has been modified for the sake of our interest in another country, China, in which both the public and the leaders perceived a stronger national interest at the time of this survey. Panama was the only country where the public perceived a significantly greater vital interest than the leaders, a finding that appears to reflect the popular belief, not shared by most leaders, that the Panama Canal is of major importance to United States security.

Three other countries on the list were viewed in sharp variance by the leaders and the public. Leaders were much more likely than the public to see a vital United States interest in Italy, Turkey, and Brazil. Most of the public might be unaware that Italy and Turkey are members of the NATO alliance and that Brazil is an emerging industrial power. The public was probably also unaware of the fact that Nigeria, another country rated notably higher by the leaders, is an important oil producer and the largest country in sub-Saharan Africa. The three countries at the bottom of the list for both public and leaders were India, Rhodesia, and Poland, none of which has obvious "political, economic, or security" importance for the United States. Still, even the lowest-ranked country, Poland, was considered a place of vital interest by 28% of the public and 42% of the leaders.

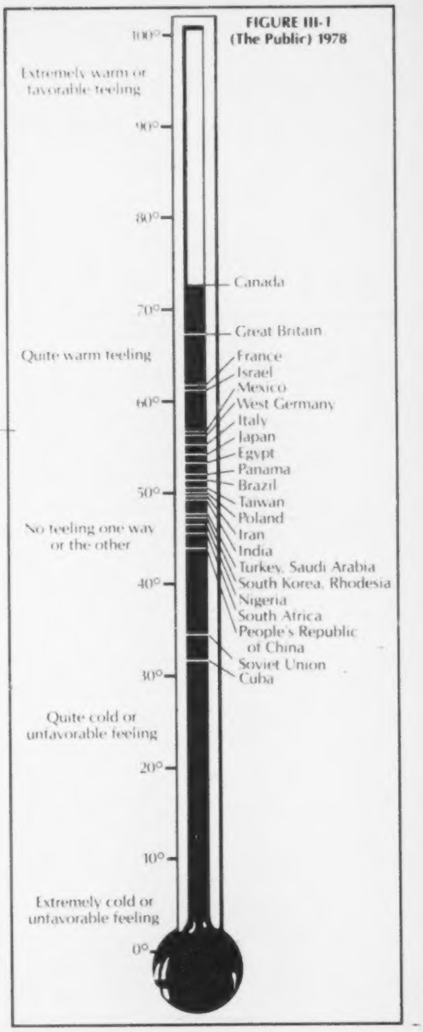
FIGURE III-1
(The Public) 1978

The perception of vital interests in different parts of the world was another indication of the continued internationalism of the American people and their leaders. Table III-3 shows that in almost every case leaders involved in foreign policy were more likely to perceive a vital interest than the public at large; the average across the list of 24 countries is 60% of the public and 78% of the leaders.

This point is confirmed by comparing attentive and non-attentive segments of the public. Among the 37% of the public least attentive to foreign news, an average of 49% said that we had a vital interest in

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*Although the list included countries from all parts of the world, it did *not* include all countries that might rank high or low on a list of United States priorities.

these countries. That figure rose to an average 64% among those with moderate interest in foreign affairs (45% of the sample). Among the attentive public, the percentage of the sample paying most attention to foreign news, the average figure perceiving a vital interest in each country was 72%.

This relationship held up for Western countries, communist countries, and Third World countries as well as for Saudi Arabia at the top of the public's list and Poland at the bottom. Indeed, the attentive public was more likely to perceive a vital interest in every country on the list except Panama. Since a majority of the public perceived a vital interest in over two-thirds of the countries on the list, it is reasonable to take these results as evidence that the public accepts a basic internationalist role for the United States in specific as well as general terms.

AMERICANS VIEW THE WORLD

The public sample also was asked to describe feelings about each of the countries by indicating a degree-reading on a "feeling thermometer." The feeling thermometer, printed on a display card, showed regular graduations ranging from 0 degrees ("no feeling one way or the other") to 100 degrees ("extremely warm or favorable feeling"). Table III-4 and Figure III-1 show the mean temperature reading for each of the 24 countries.

Most countries tended to cluster around the middle of the thermometer, near the 50° mark, a result that indicates a propensity among many respondents to offer "no feeling one way or the other" about many countries. (Respondents who said they were "not familiar with" a country were screened out.) The two English-speaking countries with the closest cultural and historical ties to the United States—Canada and Great Britain—were at the top of the list, with France and Israel close behind, also averaging over 60°. Not surprisingly, two communist countries were at the bottom of the list—Cuba (32°) and the Soviet Union (34°). But it is interesting that Americans made a sharp distinction between these two quite unpopular countries and the People's Republic of China, which averaged a considerably higher reading of 44° and Poland which registered 50°.

Just as the attentive public was more likely to feel that the U.S. had a vital interest in every country, so too did the attentive public show warmer feelings toward every country—the Soviet Union, China, and South Africa as well as Canada, Great Britain, and Israel. The non-attentive public gave each country on the list an average thermometer reading of 49°. Those who paid a moderate amount of attention to foreign news gave an average thermometer reading of 52°. And those high in attention also were relatively favorable in their feelings, giving an average thermometer reading of 56°. Interest in and attention to foreign affairs was accompanied by a more favorable feeling about "foreign countries" generally, no matter what the ideological disposition of the country or its relations with the United States.

Feelings toward different countries were not strongly related to ideology. There were almost no differences between self-described liberals, moderates, and conservatives in their feelings toward Taiwan, South Korea, Rhodesia, or South Africa, for example. The only systematic ideological differences occurred in the case of the four communist countries on the list—the Soviet Union, China, Cuba, and Poland. Self-described conservatives were least favorable and self-described liberals most favorable toward each.

The overall weakness of ideological differences suggests that respondents might have been describing their feelings about

TABLE III-4. Comparison of favorability readings with vital interest perceptions [illegible]

	Thermometer Readings	U.S. does have a vital interest	
	Public (Degrees)	Public (%)	Leaders (%)
Advanced industrial countries			
Canada	72°	69%	95%
Great Britain	67	66	94
France	62	54	90
West Germany	57	69	98
Italy	56	36	80
Japan	56	78	99
AVERAGE	62°	62%	93%
Other United States allies			
Israel	61°	78%	91%
Taiwan	51	53	55
Iran	50	67	92
South Korea	48	61	70
Turkey	48	39	75
AVERAGE	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
Third World			
Mexico	58°	60%	90%
Egypt	53	75	91
Panama	53	77	66
Brazil	52	38	73
India	49	37	55
Saudi Arabia	48	80	95
Nigeria	47	42	59
AVERAGE	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
White minority regimes			
Rhodesia	47°	45%	49%
South Africa	[illegible]	63	62
AVERAGE	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]			
Poland	50°	28%	42%
People's Republic of China	44	70	93
Soviet Union	34	74	95
Cuba	32	66	69
AVERAGE	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

countries as a whole—their peoples and cultures—and not just the governments currently in power. A second interpretation is that the differences implied by the labels "liberal," "moderate," and "conservative" might have little to do with feelings about other countries. Those labels do have a great deal to do with views of U.S. policies and spending programs of the kind shown in Figure I-1. They also appear to have something to do with attitudes toward Communism as an ideology. But the data here show that liberals, moderates, and conservatives differed very little in their definition of U.S. vital interests or their feelings about specific countries.

Table III-4 groups the 24 countries into 5 categories. The categories can be ordered according to their favorability ratings by the U.S. public. Highest favorability was shown toward the advanced industrial countries. The next category includes 5 countries that have military alliances with the United States; Israel showed a significantly higher favorability rating than the other countries in this group. Third World countries fell near the middle of the thermometer scale, averaging 51°. The only country that stood out in this category was Mexico (58°), a U.S. neighbor. The four communist countries were ranked lowest, although the public did show significantly different attitudes toward each of them.

It also can be seen in Table III-4 that perception of a vital U.S. interest in a country is not predicated on favorability. Both the public and the leaders perceived that the U.S. has strong vital interests in advanced industrial countries allied with us. But equally strong vital interests were perceived in the Soviet Union and China and in several Third World countries (Mexico, Egypt, Iran, Saudi Arabia). There was a correlation in the sample between favorability and the perception of vital interests: better educated, more attentive, and more internationalist respondents tended to exhibit both. But there was no correlation amoung *countries*; quite logically, Americans perceived many vital interests in places they did not like. Particularly noteworthy differences between the public's ranking of vital interest and favorability occurred in the cases of Italy, Poland and Brazil, all of which were ranked low in terms of vital interest but comparitvely high in favorability.

FEELINGS ABOUT INDIVIDUALS

Foreign policy involves individual leaders as well as nations. The thermometer scale also was used to assess the public's feelings about 14 political figures well known in foreign (and, for comparison, domestic) affairs. Those respondents who said they were not familiar with a particular figure were screened out of the ratings. Figure III-2 summarizes the results.

Generally speaking, these public figures divided into two types: those who were ideologically controversial and those who were not. Most of the figures involved in foreign affairs were not ideologically controversial. There was almost no difference between self-described liberals and conservatives in their feelings toward Kissinger, Vance, Moynihan, Sadat, Begin, and Schmidt. But each of these figures was given a significantly higher favorability rating by those attentive than by those non-attentive to foreign affairs.

The second group consisted of individuals not primarily related to foreign affairs; all were Americans—Carter, Kennedy, Ford, Reagan, and McGovern. In each case there were significant differences of opinion by ideology, with liberals more favorable to Carter, Kennedy, and McGovern and conservatives more favorable to Ford and Reagan. Attentiveness to foreign affairs made little difference in public attitudes toward these "domestic" figures.

It was pointed out earlier that ideology seemed to have little impact on attitudes toward foreign countries. It now appears that the same can be said for attitudes toward individuals who are primarily regarded as actors in the field of foreign policy. Three figures on the list constitute an exception to this rule: Andrew Young, Ian Smith, and Idi Amin. These individuals are primarily related to foreign affairs, but in each case favorability went *down* as attention to foreign affairs increased. That is, Young, Smith, and Amin were given lower ratings by those who paid attention to foreign policy. Moreover, Young was given substantially higher ratings by liberals than by conservatives while Smith was better regarded by conservatives than by liberals. Idi Amin fared badly with all respondents.

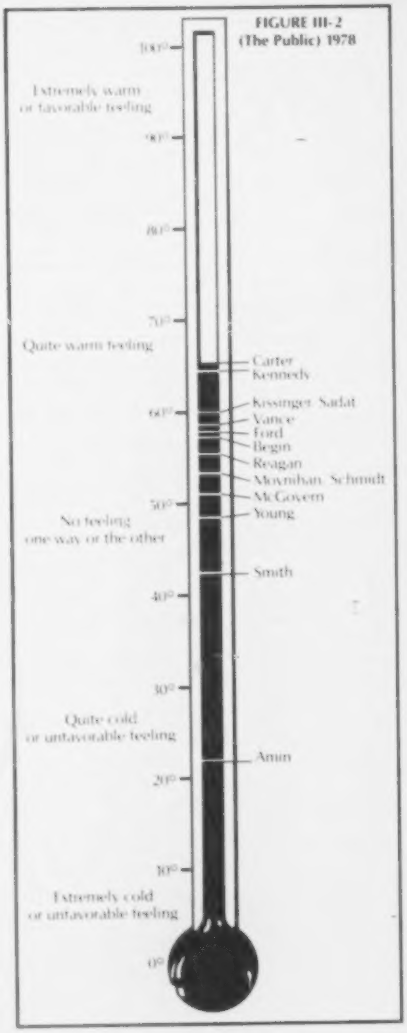


FIGURE III-2
(The Public) 1978

IV. U.S. Economic involvement

As in the previous Chicago Council on Foreign Relations study, international economic affairs loomed large in overall United States foreign policy considerations. At the same time, there have been some changes in the issues identified as of greatest public concern.

Inflation and the decline of the dollar appeared as the most significant issues. A total of 67% of the public listed inflation as their primary concern. American foreign policy leaders were even more concerned, with 85% selecting inflation as among the two or three biggest problems. Sentiment was especially strong among special interest and foreign policy groups (92%), business (91%), members of Congress (90%), and educators (85%). The leaders sample was also more concerned about unemployment (25% compared to 19% of the public) but less about taxes (6% compared to 18%).

INTERDEPENDENCE

Public awareness of a relationship between international events and domestic economic questions continued, though the appreciation of the interdependence of the two was less strong in 1978 than in 1974, except in relation to the decline of the dollar. (The high public awareness in 1974 reflected the attention drawn by the World Food Congress' focus on these issues as well as the immediacy of the 1973 Middle East oil embargo.) As Table IV-1 indicates, in 1978 large segments of the public believed foreign policy had major impacts as follows: gasoline prices, 85%; U.S. economy, 72%; food prices at home, 64%; and unemployment at home, 51%.

In 1978 the leaders indicated an awareness that foreign policy had a strong impact on the United States economy (83%). However, leaders differentiated more sharply between topics and issues. Foreign policy was not seen to be too closely related to food prices and domestic unemployment (39% and 30%, respectively, felt it had a "major impact"); but a strong impact was seen on gasoline prices and the value of the dollar abroad ("major impact" by 77% each).

DECLINE OF THE DOLLAR

The decline of the dollar was clearly a matter of urgent concern to both the public and the leaders. It was the area where the public perceived the greatest impact on their daily lives. Fully 94% of the public was aware of the decline of the dollar, and 67% viewed this with "great concern." A total of 66% of the leadership group felt "great concern." Only 5% of the public regarded this subject with "not very much concern" or "no concern." When asked to select the most important reason for the decline of United States influence in the world, a large plurality of 36% chose "the declining value of the dollar" over five other reasons listed, including the Vietnam War, Soviet military buildup, and political corruption in the United States.

Public willingness to sacrifice in order to strengthen the dollar varied, with the preferred alternative being to cut government spending, even if that involved a cut in government services (51% favored this and 8% were opposed). A total of 31% were for and 13% against raising tariffs; 18% would risk higher unemployment, but 40% would not; 50% opposed raising the price of gasoline and oil by 25¢ to discourage use, with only 7% in favor.

Table IV-2 shows the percentages willing and unwilling to take each of four suggested measures to "help stop the decline of the dollar." By far the most popular remedy was to cut federal spending and "risk a cut in government services." Just over half the public was willing to do this while only 8% said they would definitely oppose such a policy, giving net support of 43%. Raising tariffs, the next most popular remedy, showed net support of 18%. The other two measures were both strongly opposed: risking higher unemployment (net 30% opposed) and raising the price of oil and gasoline (net 43% opposed). The impact of "Proposition 13" showed up clearly here, even though this same sample favored the same amount (or more) government spending on education, highways, farm subsidies, and defense. The rank ordering of these responses corresponded to self-interest. Most people were inclined toward cuts that would not have a direct or immediate bearing on their pocketbooks.

Among leaders a substantial majority—77%—favored cutting government spending, but large percentages also favored raising the price of gas and oil (51% for and 24% against) and risking higher unemployment (44% for and 30% against). Few leaders were willing to raise tariffs (16% for and 59% against).

TABLE IV-1. Impact of U.S. foreign policy on economic developments—The Public
"How important an impact do you think U.S. foreign policy has on the following: a major impact, a minor impact, or no impact at all?"

[illegible]

The subject of tariffs provoked very different responses from the public and leaders. The public favored retaining tariffs by a margin of 57% to 22%, but most leaders would eliminate tariffs (75% in favor and 23% opposed). Anti-tariff sentiment was especially strong among members of the Administration interviewed (91%), special foreign policy groups (91%), business leaders (89%), and educators (83%).

BUSINESS AND LABOR

On some international problems leadership groups were sharply divided in their views. The contrast was especially sharp between business and labor, and differences between the Administration and Congress also were significant. A total of 89% of business leaders favored the elimination of tariffs, but only 42% of labor leaders favored this. Among business leaders, 91% saw inflation as a very important problem in contrast to 68% of labor leaders; 37% of labor leaders regarded unemployment as a significant problem but only 11% of business leaders did; 21% of labor leaders favored cutting foreign aid, compared to only 4% of business leaders. (See Figure IV-1)

At a time when the incumbent was a Democrat, Jimmy Carter, business leaders favored a stronger role for the president (34%), compared to only 16% of labor leaders. Labor preferred a stronger foreign policy role for Congress (53%), compared to only 29% of business leaders. A large percentage (53%) of labor leaders regarded the role of the State Department as very important; only 24% of business leaders so regarded it. Business leaders believed that both the secretary of state (44%) and the State Department, should play a more important role; only 16% and 11%, respectively, of labor leaders shared that view.

Labor leaders perceived a stronger presidential role and a weaker congressional role than did business leaders. Conversely, labor leaders want Congress to play a greater role in foreign policy while business leaders want the president to be more important. This might reflect labor's greater lobbying success with Congress. Also, the president is generally more supportive of foreign trade while Congress is generally more "domestic-minded" and protective of jobs in the United States.

Differences also existed on the subject of foreign trade and the priorities given to important United States trading partners such as the European Community. Business leaders thought the EEC was more helpful; labor was suspicious of the EEC. Business leaders were more sensitive to the decline in economic power of the United States due to the fact that the United States no longer dominated the world economy as it had for three decades. Business leaders generally preferred a more aggressive and competitive trade policy to counter Japan and West Germany.

FIGURE IV-1 (The Leaders) 1978
MAJOR DIFFERENCES BETWEEN BUSINESS AND LABOR LEADERS

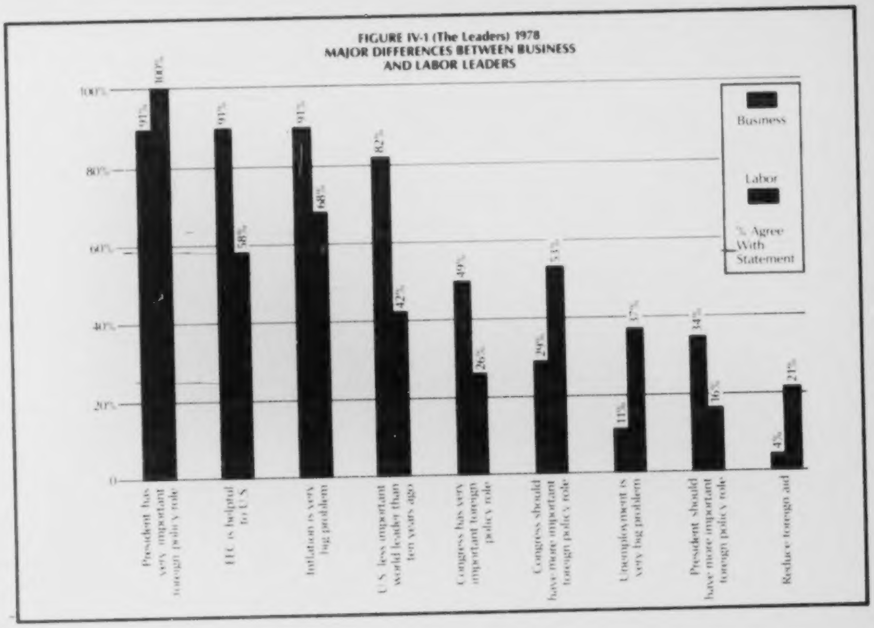


TABLE IV-2. The decline of the dollar—1978

"Which, if any, of the things listed on this card would you be willing to do to help stop the decline of the dollar? "Are there any things on this card that you would definitely oppose?"

[illegible]	Public		Leaders	
	Willing to do	Definitely oppose	Willing to do	Definitely oppose
1. Risk higher unemployment [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
2. Cut federal government spending and risk a cut [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
3. [illegible] gasoline and oil so as to discourage people from [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
4. [illegible] foreign goods more expensive so the U.S. would import fewer [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

EUROPE

In the field of international economic affairs, Western Europe plays an increasingly important role. As the largest trading area in the world, the European Community continues to grow in significance in an era when international economic considerations are increasing in importance in relation to security and political issues. The Council's survey revealed a substantial increase in knowledge by the American people of the European Community, from 45% in 1973 (when the Gallup Organization last put the question to the public) to 63% in 1978. A total of 31% of the public believed that ties between the United States and Western Europe were closer today than they were a decade ago.

A series of more specialized questions were put only to leaders. Among these, 60% responded that the European Community had been helpful to the United States, with only 5% seeing it as harmful. The European Parliament was viewed with favor by 69%, compared to 16% unfavorable. Leaders also strongly favored the new European Monetary System by 69% to 19%, and they split evenly at 36% on the question of whether or not ties between the United States and Europe were closer today than they were a decade ago. Business leaders were more positive than their labor counterparts about the increased closeness of the relationship between the United States and Western Europe (78% to 69%).

FOREIGN ECONOMIC AID

In a period when increasingly selective involvement by the United States overseas enjoys support and when the public is tending more to self-interest than to altruistic policies, it was not surprising that the foreign aid program, both economic and military, continued to decline in public support. From 1974 to 1978 the percentage of the public supporting economic aid in general dropped from 52% to 46%. Foreign aid continued to be seen as an entering wedge for further involvement, with 25% of the public believing that economic aid gets the United States too involved with other countries. When applied to a specific area such as Africa, 44% of the public favored giving economic aid to black African nations. But the majority (57%) expressed concern that such aid would lead to United States military involvement in the area.

In contrast, 88% of the leaders favored aid to black Africa, with only 9% thinking that economic aid would lead to military involvement and 86% believing it would not. Within the public, 77% of those opposed to economic aid to black African nations believed such aid leads to military involvement as well. Only 44% of those favoring economic aid thought it would do so.

There has been a slight decline in public support for economic aid since 1974, from 52% to 46%, while opposition has grown from 38% to 41%. Although the trend of support for foreign aid was downward, it is relevant to recall that popular support for foreign aid never was overwhelming. Success in obtaining congressional support and popular acquiescence always depended on strong presidential leadership. Even in the most favorable periods support was qualified, with 51% favoring it in 1958 (33% against), 58% in 1963 (30% against), and 57% in 1965 (33% against).

MILITARY AID

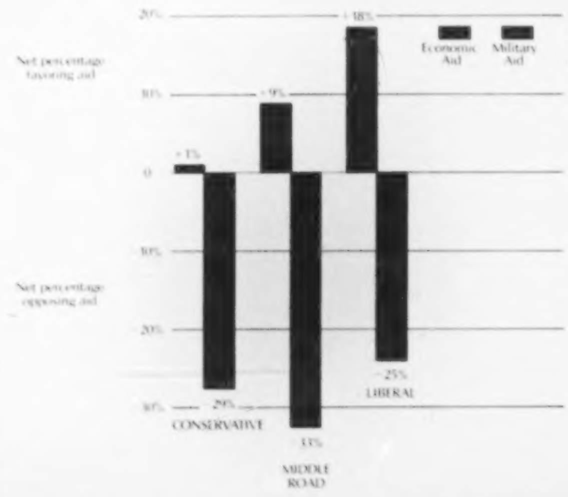
Military aid continued to be unpopular although the actual level of public support increased from 22% to 29% between 1974 and 1978. There were both similarities and differences among those who supported economic and military aid. Both constituencies tended to be strong internationalists. For example, although only 59% of the public believed that the United States should take an "active part" in world affairs, 77% of those who advocated economic aid and 76% of those for military aid felt that way. A total of 72% of the public responded that military assistance helps the national security of other countries, 79% that economies of other countries are helped, 46% that political friends abroad are strengthened, 35% that our national security is aided, and 34% that the spread of Communism is resisted.

The constituency for military aid was not the same as for economic aid. Among the leadership, 91% favored economic aid, and only 60% favored military aid. Among the public, 39% of those who favored economic aid were against military aid, with only 19% of military aid supporters opposed to economic aid.

Self-described liberals, not surprisingly, were more positive about economic assistance than were conservatives, 18% more of the liberals being in favor of aid than against it. Self-described conservatives were only 0.5% more in favor of aid than against it. Both conservatives and liberals were in net terms strongly opposed to military aid. Among the public, those who supported military aid tended to be more conservative in their views on Communism and security issues than those who supported economic aid. This group responded more strongly in favoring some important foreign policy goals, with a higher percentage giving priority to containing Communism (68% to 61%), the security of our allies (66% to 56%), and protecting American business interests abroad (52% to 42%). (See Figure IV-2)

Those who were better educated, more attentive to news, and in professional occupations tended to be more in favor of

FIGURE IV-2 (The Public) 1978
DEGREE OF SUPPORT FOR ECONOMIC AND MILITARY AID
AMONG SELF-DESCRIBED CONSERVATIVES, MODERATES AND LIBERALS



Each index was determined by subtracting those who oppose a type of aid from those favoring that aid

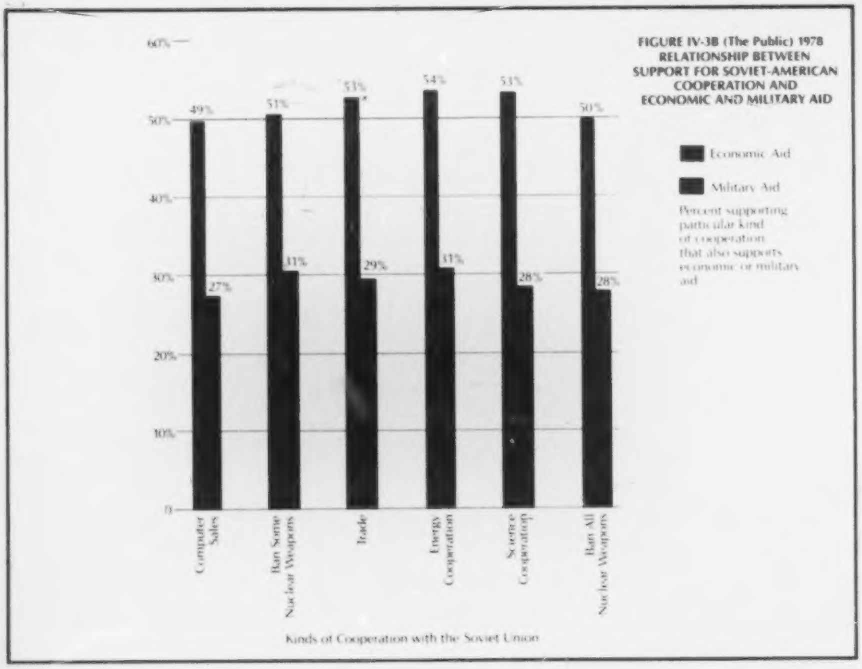


FIGURE IV-3B (The Public) 1978 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SUPPORT FOR SOVIET-AMERICAN COOPERATION AND ECONOMIC AND MILITARY AID

economic aid but not equally supportive of military aid. For example, 59% of college graduates but only 45% of high school and 26% of grade school graduates were in favor of economic assistance. For military aid, the respective figures were 33%, 29%, and 23%. The levels of support among attentive and non-attentive people were 63% and 33%, respectively, for economic aid, and 40% and 22%, respectively, for military aid. A comparatively large percentage of college graduates and the public believed that foreign aid aggravated relations with other nations and did not prevent the spread of Communism.

Supporters of military aid were less disposed than economic aid advocates to believe the Vietnam War was fundamentally wrong and immoral (36% to 45%) or that the U.S. had a very important stake in combating world hunger (69% to 74%). More military aid advocates than economic aid backers favored increasing defense spending (37% to 31%).

Figures IV-3a and IV-3b compare the differing attitudes toward economic and military aid with those held on the question of cooperation with the Soviet Union. Both the public and opinion leaders who support cooperation with the Soviets were more likely to back economic than military aid. That included those favoring a total nuclear ban, a dramatic departure from the *status quo*, and those voicing strong aversion to the sale of advanced computers, which bears directly on national security concerns.

Table IV-3 shows that economic aid was consistently more popular than military aid; that was true for both the public and the leaders, and it was true as in 1974 as well. However, economic aid has lost support among the public since 1974 (from 52% to 46% in favor) while military aid has gained public support (from 22% in 1974 to 29% in 1978).

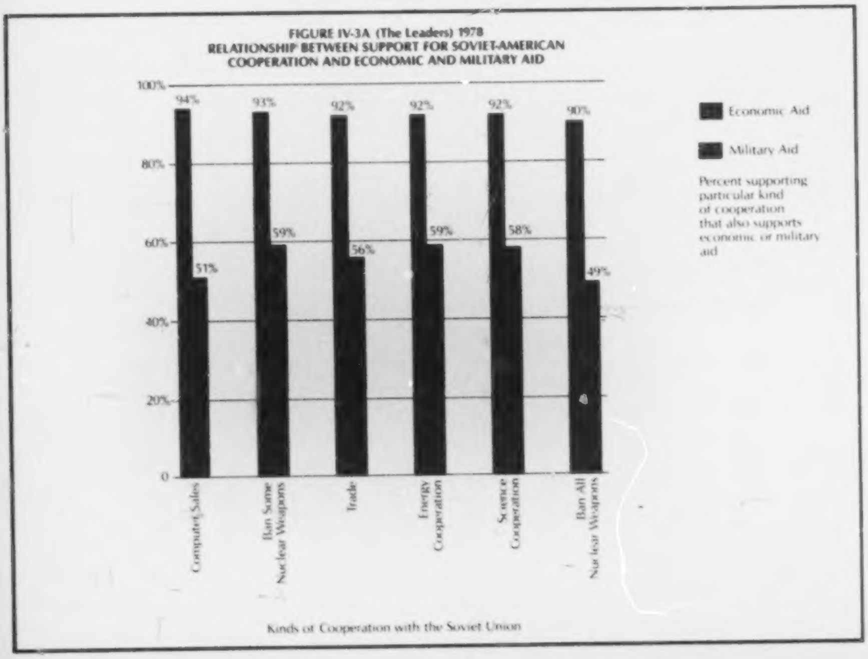


FIGURE IV-3A (The Leaders) 1978 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SUPPORT FOR SOVIET-AMERICAN COOPERATION AND ECONOMIC AND MILITARY AID

TABLE IV-3. Economic and military aid to other nations—1978

	Public		Leaders
	1974	1978	1978
Economic Aid			
"On the whole, do you favor or oppose our giving economic aid to other nations for purposes of economic development and technical assistance?"			
Percent in Favor	52%	46%	90%
"Do you feel that giving U.S. economic aid to other countries generally:"			
Positive statements:			
Helps the economy of others	77	78	87
Helps national security of others	65	72	81
Strengthens our political friends	50	50	74
Helps our own national security	44	45	71
Helps prevent spread of Communism	36	36	50
Helps our own economy	25	34	62
Negative statements:			
Gets us too involved in other countries' affairs	73	75	34
Aggravates relations with others	52	64	42
Military Aid			
"On the whole, do you favor or oppose our giving military aid to other nations? By military aid I mean arms and equipment, but not troops."			
Percent in Favor	27%	29%	60%
"Do you think that giving military aid to other countries generally:"			
Positive statements:			
Helps national security of others	69	72	87
Helps the economy of others	60	59	40
Good substitute for troops	44	49	70
Strengthens our political friends	43	46	[illegible]
Helps our own economy	31	43	75
Helps our own national security	36	35	66
Helps prevent spread of Communism	36	34	52
Negative statements:			
Gets us too involved in other countries' affairs	78	79	55
Aggravates relations with others	67	73	65
Supports dictators	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

CONCLUSIONS

The reason for the unpopularity of foreign aid is clear enough. Respondents apparently believed that both forms of aid help the economy and national security of others. But respondents were not particularly convinced that foreign aid helps the United States. About half of the 1978 sample felt that economic aid and military aid strengthen our political friends, an indirect benefit to us. Fewer than half see any direct benefit to the United States, either by helping *our* economy or by helping *our* national security. Most important is the fact that no more than one-third of Americans felt that either form of aid "helps prevent the spread of Communism" —the principal justification for such aid during the Cold War.

Criticisms of foreign aid—that it gets us too involved in other countries' affairs and aggravates our relations with other countries—were widely accepted. In sum, foreign aid was perceived as an altruistic program. It helps others more than it helps us, and it does *not* prevent the spread of Communism. Moreover, it gets us too involved with other countries and might actually worsen relations instead of improving them.

The question of why economic aid has fallen in public support while military aid has risen is somewhat puzzling. The public did not see military aid as especially helpful to U.S. national security. Table IV-3 reveals that one domestic attribute of both forms of foreign aid was more widely acknowledged in 1978 than in 1974—that foreign aid helps our own economy.

On the other hand, there was also a noticeable increase in the percentage of the public who felt that foreign aid of either type aggravates our relations with other countries. In the case of economic aid, the criticism that such aid aggravates relations rose by 12% while the feeling that such aid helps our own economy rose by 9%. In the case of military aid, the criticism that it aggravates relations rose by 6% while the view that military aid helps our own economy rose by a substantial 12%.

The data suggest that Americans are becoming more sensitive to both the positive and negative effects of foreign aid. The growing perception that military aid helps our own economy might be the reason for increased support of this form of aid. But it remains true in 1978 as in 1974 that military aid to other nations is quite unpopular.

V. U.S. Military Involvement

POST-VIETNAM

During the past four years, since the United States concluded direct involvement in the divisive Vietnam War, the focus of attention has shifted to the growing Soviet strategic military buildup.

As noted earlier, this concern about growing Soviet military power has resulted in a substantial increase of public support for greater defense spending. Figure I-3 in Chapter I, comparing preferences for different government spending programs, shows that there has been a net increase of 38% in support of greater defense spending since 1974. Defense spending is the only program to shift from a net unfavorable rating in 1974 to a net favorable rating in 1978. In contrast, foreign economic and military aid remained highly unpopular with the public. From 1974 to 1978 a 20% shift took place in favor of increased defense spending, from 14% to 34%. During the same period, sentiment for cutting back defense spending declined from 42% to 24%. That was a significant shift. Yet the center of gravity in opinion still favored maintaining the same level of spending rather than increasing it; however, the center shifted away from favoring cuts.

Both in 1974 and 1978 attitudes toward defense spending were measured in two ways. First, respondents were asked whether present federal government programs should be "expanded, cut back, or kept about the same." In this context, defense spending was being compared with other domestic and international programs, including such popular ones as aid to education. When asked in this context, 34% of the public favored expanding defense spending, and 24% were for cutting it back. This compares with 14% favoring and 42% for cutbacks in 1974, a shift of 20% and 18%, respectively.

When this question was asked later by itself, not in the context of competing federal programs and with no trade-offs implied, a different result occurred: 16% favored cutting back; 45% favored maintaining the same level; and 32% favored expanding defense spending. In both years, cutting back defense spending was more popular when the question was asked in competition with other spending programs. By either measure there has been a shift in favor of higher defense spending, a shift of roughly the same magnitude.

Table V-1 puts these findings of the 1974 and 1978 Council surveys in a broader context of Gallup Poll results (on defense spending alone without reference to other federal programs) going back to 1960. The conclusion suggested by this table is that support for greater defense spending is now slightly above the high levels of 1960, a period of great concern about the alleged "missile gap" with the Soviet Union. Despite the large shift from 1974 to 1978, one should note that only about one-third of the public favored increased defense spending.

Council survey data indicated that the attentive public is more strongly in favor of a higher level of defense spending, with 52% favoring an increase in the defense budget. This is probably related to the fact that a higher percentage of the attentive public (72%) believed that the U.S. was falling behind the Soviet Union. Among the non-attentive group, only 19% would increase it and 16% would reduce it, compared to 14% among the attentive group. (See Table V-2)

TABLE V-2.

	[illegible]			
	Low	Medium	High	Leaders
[illegible]	[illegible]	57%	72%	39%
[illegible]	[illegible]	34	52	31

This public and attentive public sentiment for increasing the defense budget was not fully shared by opinion leaders. Though relatively the same proportion of leaders (31% compared to 32%) favored increasing the defense budget, a substantially higher percentage (28% compared to 16%) favored cutting it back. Similarly, a smaller percentage of the leaders (39%) than of the public (56%) felt the United States was falling behind the Soviet Union in power and influence. This contrasts with the greater willingness of the leadership group than of the public at large to support the use of United States troops in selected situations.

In the occupational groups represented among the leaders, the strongest supporters for enlarging defense spending were members of Congress (45%), business executives (44%), members of the Administration (39%), and interest group representatives (37%).

TABLE V-1. Sentiments on defense spending—The Public

1974 and 1978 Chicago Council on Foreign Relations results compared to Gallup Poll trend. Gallup did not collect data for 1960-68. The CCFR questions were slightly different: 1) Cut back; 2) Keep same; 3) Expand.

	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

THE SOVIET UNION

The 1978 Council data suggested that the principal reason for increased support of both defense spending and willingness to commit troops in selected areas was the perceived growing military threat of the Soviet Union. Of those favoring an increase in spending, 69% believed the United States was falling behind the Soviet Union. A clear majority of the public (56%) shared this view. Thirty percent of the public regarded this development with "great concern." When the public was asked if they would favor a cutback in defense spending if the cutback would *not* mean falling behind the Soviet Union, the percentage favoring a cutback increased from 16% to 59%.

Although there were some differences (6%) between Democrats and Republicans on this issue, a majority of those identified as Democrats (55%) and Republicans (61%) indicated they believed the United States is falling behind.

It is striking that the attentive public is *more* likely to feel that we are falling behind the Soviet Union, while the leaders are less likely to feel this way. This finding correlates with the differences on defense spending above.

Although a smaller percentage of opinion leaders (39%) than of the public believed the United States was falling behind the Soviet Union, a substantial 64% of these expressed "great concern" about this development, and 72% were willing to pay more taxes to improve the U.S. position vis-a-vis the other side. That sentiment was especially strong among special interest groups (100%), special foreign policy groups (87%), and members of Congress (79%). But along with the fear of growing Soviet military power, there remained strong support for greater cooperation with the Soviet Union.

INTERVENTION

Worry over Soviet military power has not led to broad sentiment in favor of military interventions in other countries. In the public sample there were only two cases in which more than 50% would send troops: a Soviet invasion of Western Europe (54%) and a refusal by Panama to let the United States use the Canal (58%). Forty-eight percent would send troops if the Russians took over West Berlin and 42% if Japan were invaded by the Soviet Union. In most cases a third or less of the public favored using U.S. troops. (See Table V-3)

Among the leaders, an overwhelming majority (92%) favored United States troop commitment if Soviet armies invaded Western Europe, and large majorities favored use of arms if the Soviet Union invaded West Berlin (77%) or if Japan were invaded by the Soviet Union (81%). Though the gap between popular support and leadership support on this question remained

TABLE V-3. U.S. response to crisis situations—1978

"There has been some discussion about the circumstances that might justify using U.S. troops in other parts of the world. I'd like to ask your opinion about several situations. First, would you favor or oppose the use of U.S. troops if: . . .

"I am going to read the circumstances under which you said you would oppose sending U.S. troops. On this card are levels of U.S. involvement that might be appropriate under these circumstances. For each situation, tell me how far you feel the U.S. should be willing to go."

	Send Troops		Do Nothing		Try to Negotiate		Refuse to Trade		Send Military Supplies		Don't Know	
Situations	Pub.	Ldrs.	Pub.	Ldrs.	Pub.	Ldrs.	Pub.	Ldrs.	Pub.	Ldrs.	Pub.	Ldrs.
1. Panama closes Canal to U.S.	58%	49%	3%	2%	22%	32%	4%	10%	2%	2%	11%	2%
2. Soviets invade West Europe	54	92	9	*	16	[illegible]	2	[illegible]	6	4	13	1
3. Soviets take West Berlin	48	77	10	1	19	11	3	4	6	4	14	[illegible]
4. Soviets invade Japan	42	81	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
5. Arabs cut off oil to U.S.	36	28	5	3	34	37	10	27	1	10	11	7
6. Rhodesia invaded by Cuban troops supplied by Soviets	25	50	18	16	[illegible]	48	3	[illegible]	10	27	[illegible]	[illegible]
7. [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
8. North Korea invades South Korea	21	40	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	9	22	[illegible]	[illegible]
9. [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
10. Soviets invade Yugoslavia	18	13	26	13	30	30	3	[illegible]	6	22	11	[illegible]
11. Israel invaded by Arab states	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

large, it should be noted that public support for the use of United States troops in these situations has increased. In the case of Soviet attack on Western Europe, it rose from 39% in 1974 to 54% in 1978; support on Berlin rose from 34% to 48%.

A similar increase of support for troop commitments occurred among leaders. Support for troop commitment if Western Europe were invaded increased from 77% in 1974 to 92% in 1978; on the question of West Berlin, an increase from 55% to 77% occurred. The conclusion suggested here is that although the number of places where the American public and their leaders are prepared to support commitment of United States troops is limited, willingness to take action in those select, high priority areas is greater among both the leadership and the public than it was four years ago. One should also note that all the above examples illustrate a potential response to a Soviet military challenge. No comparable concern is evident with regard to China, North Korea or Cuba.

Memories of the Vietnam War continued to be important in direct military involvement. When asked whether the "Vietnam War was more than a mistake; was fundamentally wrong and immoral," fully 72% of the public sample agreed, 47% of them strongly. Only 7% disagreed strongly. The leadership group was more evenly divided, with 30% agreeing strongly and 21% disagreeing strongly. These sentiments also were echoed in the 1974 survey.

The public's attitude toward the commitment of American troops reflected their attitude on participation in the Vietnam War. Of those who viewed our participation in Vietnam as morally wrong, only 19% would favor United States troop commitments if China invaded Taiwan, 45% if the Soviet Union took over West Berlin, and 58% if Panama closed the Canal to the United States. Among those who did *not* view our participation in the Vietnam War in those terms, 31%, 65%, and 69% favored United States troop commitments in each of the three situations specified above.

NATO

Consistent with greater concern about the power of the Soviet Union, there was an increase in support for the principal U.S. defense alliance, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Among the public there was a 5% increase in the number who wanted to "increase the NATO commitment," an 8% increase of those who want to "keep the commitment what it is," and a 4% drop in the number of those wanting to decrease the commitment.

Among leaders, the shift over the four-year period in favor of stronger support of NATO was even sharper. Those who believed that we should "increase our commitment" to NATO rose from 5% in 1974 to 21% in 1978; those who would keep the commitment as it is increased slightly from 62% to 65%; those who would decrease our commitment to NATO dropped from 29% in 1974 to 12% in 1978. Among the leaders, the group with the highest percentage favoring an "increase in commitment" were members of the United States Congress, 38% being so inclined.

Thus, increasing support for NATO once again contrasted with the general wariness of becoming involved militarily overseas. But it squared with the thrust of the data generally, which suggested that despite the desire to curtail commitments in certain parts of the world, Americans are prepared to support greater efforts in defense of American interests in certain high-priority areas of the world. There is a continuing reluctance to make commitments *everywhere*, but at the same time a greater willingness to honor selective commitments *somewhere*. That included defending Western Europe in the face of the perceived growing Soviet military buildup. In this respect President Carter's proposed increase in defense spending to strengthen United States forces in NATO, is in tune with public sentiment.

ROLE OF THE MILITARY

Given the direct and controversial role of the United States military in Vietnam, it might be expected that the passage of time since the conclusion of the war would bring improved public support for the military. Indications were that this has occurred. There was a marginal improvement in the perception of the military's role in the foreign policy process as compared with other institutions. During the four years since the 1974 survey, those thinking that the military plays a very important role in making foreign policy increased from 36% to 40%, and those who think the military should play a *more* important role increased from 19% to 29%. However, it should be pointed out that the total proportion desiring the military to play a more important role is, at 29%, still comparatively small. Among United States foreign policy leaders, moreover, only 29% felt the military plays a very important role, and just 10% wanted the military to have a more important role.

VI. Who Shapes U.S. Foreign Policy?

There is no more important question in a democracy than how political leaders are to be made accountable for their actions or how the governed are to influence the governors. Part of the puzzle centers around who is perceived to make decisions, who is thought to have the legitimate right to do so, and whom one can trust to convey reliable information. As the sense of public frustration with political leaders rises and as the level of confidence in the leadership of our institutions declines, the question of how decisions are made and by whom looms all the more important.

WHO PLAYS AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN DETERMINING U.S. FOREIGN POLICY?

No actor is thought to play a more important role in shaping U.S. foreign policy by both public and leader samples than the president. Seventy-two percent of the public and 94% of the leaders viewed the president as being "very important" in the conduct of foreign policy. Following the president in perceived order of importance in both public and leader surveys were the secretary of state, Congress, and the State Department, all of whom possess explicit legal mandates for such a role.

As one can see from Table VI-1, the public, more than the foreign policy leaders, saw the foreign policy decision-making process as pluralistic although both groups were in general agreement about the most important actors in that area of public affairs. The discrepancies between public and leader perceptions occurred among secondary and extra-constitutional actors. The United Nations, labor unions, American business, and the CIA were viewed as more important in determining foreign policy by the public than by the leaders.

Perceptions differed from preferences, however, and the public would like the decision-making process to be even more pluralistic than they perceived it to be at present. Substantially more of the public favored a reduced rather than a greater role in shaping U.S. foreign policy for only three institutions: the CIA, private foreign policy organizations, and labor unions. U.S. foreign policy leaders would reduce the role played by the military, the CIA, and labor unions. "Public opinion" was endorsed very strongly by the public—62% wanted it to play a greater role. Moreover, nearly half of the leaders agreed with the view that the role of the public should be expanded.

These perceptions differed from those of 1974 in important ways. First, while still perceived as important, Secretary of State Cyrus Vance was not seen to dominate foreign policy as Henry Kissinger did in 1974. In that year, an overwhelming 97% of U.S. leaders and 73% of the public viewed the secretary of state as a "very

TABLE VI-1. Role of different institutions in making foreign policy—1978

"How important a role do you think the following currently play in determining the foreign policy of the United States—a very important role, a somewhat important role, or hardly an important role at all?"

"Do you feel the roles of the following should be more important than they are now, less important than they are now, or should be about as important as they are now?"

	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	Difference (Public Minus Leaders)	Public 1974	Public 1978	Leaders 1978	Difference (Public Minus Leaders) 1978
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

TABLE VI-2. Reliability of foreign policy information sources—The Public

"We are interested in knowing how reliable you feel various sources of information on foreign policy are: very reliable, somewhat reliable, or hardly reliable at all."

	Very Reliable		Somewhat Reliable		Hardly Reliable at All		Not Sure	
	1974	1978	1974	1978	1974	1978	1974	1978
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

important" actor in determining U.S. foreign policy. In contrast, President Ford (having succeeded Richard Nixon four months prior to that survey) was viewed by only 51% of the leaders and 49% of the public as "very important." Few leaders have so dominated an arena of public affairs as Dr. Kissinger. Cyrus Vance, while rated as doing a good job (50% rated his performance "excellent" or "pretty good"), has not attracted the attention of his predecessor. Only 6% of the public were not familiar enough with Henry Kissinger to evaluate his performance as secretary of state in 1974; 20% of the public in 1978 could not do so for Cyrus Vance.

The 1978 perceptions of who shapes foreign policy differed in another important way from 1974. Congress was thought to have more influence than in the earlier survey when only 39% of the public thought Congress played a "very important" role in shaping foreign policy. That figure rose to 45% in 1978. In 1974, 38% thought Congress played too weak a role in determining foreign policy, compared to a president whom only 49% thought played a very important role. In 1978 only 29% of the public thought that the congressional role was too weak; this may be compared to a president perceived by 72% of the public as playing a very important role.

CONGRESS AND THE ADMINISTRATION

Leadership differences also were evident in comparing the Congress with the Administration. Among respondents in the Congress, 48% supported the view that the United States is falling behind the Soviet Union in power and influence. Only 17% of Administration respondents took that view. Similarly, 60% of respondents in Congress regarded containing Communism as a "very important" goal, compared to 52% in the Administration; 45% in the Congress wanted to expand defense spending, compared to 39% in the Administration; 38% in Congress would increase U.S. commitments to NATO while only 22% in the Administration would do so. In Congress 22% "agree strongly" that the United States must support some dictators because they are friendly and oppose Communism; only 7% in the Administration agreed.

Similar differences existed on questions of foreign aid. Of those interviewed in the Administration 100% favored economic aid; 78% of the Congressional respondents favored it. Four percent in the Administration believed economic aid gets us too involved with other countries; 29% in the Congress took that view.

On military aid: 83% in the Administration favored it, compared to 67% in the Congress; 52% in the Administration believed it helps our economy while 81% in the Congress thought so; 17% in the Administration believed military aid gets us too involved with other countries; 52% in the Congress thought this; 91% in the Administration believed it strengthens our political friends abroad, and 67% in the Congress shared that view. On tariffs, 91% in the Administration would eliminate them; only 71% in Congress would do so; 74% in the Congress expressed "great concern" over the decline of the dollar; only 39% in the Administration did so.

Closely tied to the issue of who should shape foreign policy is the issue of who can be relied upon to provide information that can be relied upon. Both the 1974 and 1978 surveys included the following question: "We are interested in knowing how reliable you feel various sources of information on foreign policy are—very reliable, somewhat reliable, or hardly reliable at all." In neither year was there a single source—including the president—that a majority of the public felt was "very reliable." Indeed, the top-ranked sources were strongly trusted by only about one-third of the public.

There is evidence from this question, however, that the public tended to see foreign policy as the special preserve of a single executive authority. Secretary of State Kissinger was the most widely trusted source in 1974; 36% called him "very reliable," compared with only 26% who felt the same way about President Ford. In 1978 the presidency was at the top of the list, given a "very reliable" rating by 32% of the public. Indeed, that was the only source ranked more reliable in 1978 than in 1974.

The increased trust in the president very likely was related to the change of administrations, from Nixon to Ford in 1974 to Carter in 1978. The wording of the question also was changed slightly, from "the president" in 1974 to "the presidency" in 1978. The 1978 survey did not ask about the secretary of state personally, but rather about "the State Department" in general. Whereas Kissinger had been strongly trusted by 36% in 1974, the State Department was strongly trusted by only 16% in 1978.

Table VI-2 shows the percentages of the public giving each source a "very reliable" rating in 1974 and in 1978. Figures show that most sources were considered less reliable in 1978 than in 1974; as noted, only the president/presidency went up in public esteem. The decline of trust, as the decline of interest noted for nearly all topics of public affairs, probably was related to causes outside the specific area of foreign policy.

Table VI-2 also reveals a fairly clear split between those sources that the public regarded as reliable and unreliable in the area of foreign policy. The relatively reliable sources were the president and news media. (In 1974 Secretary of State Kissinger was also in this group.) Interestingly, television news was the most highly regarded news medium in both surveys, as compared with newspapers, magazines, and radio news. This might reflect the fact that television has become the principal source of news for most Americans in recent years. All other sources were considered less reliable, in the sense that more people called them "hardly reliable at all" than called them "very reliable." This less reliable group included friends, private foreign policy organizations (that the public perhaps regarded as lobbying groups), and all institutions of government aside from the president. Thus, the public did not consider foreign policy leaders in Congress, political party leaders, or the State Department as reliable sources of information on foreign policy.

It is significant that the public rated the news media as a more reliable source of information on foreign policy than Congress, political parties, and the State Department. The latter sources, however, do reach the public primarily through the news media, which might account for the media's more favorable rating. In any event, those ratings suggest that the public might possibly regard *the media* as a better check on presidential authority in the area of foreign policy than other branches of government or the opposition party. That was quite possibly the case during the Vietnam War. Opposition to presidential policy in Vietnam tended to emerge very early in the media, not in Congress, the State Department, or the opposition party. These data suggest that the principal institutional adversaries in the area of foreign policy, at least from the public's point of view, might be the president and the media rather than the "textbook" system of checks and balances among different branches of government and political parties. Conversely, the president must win the support of the media if he is to sell his foreign policy to the public.

With slight modification, these same conclusions can be drawn for the attentive public. Two sets of actors were likely to be viewed by this part of the sample as "very" reliable. They were the presidency (viewed as the most reliable source by the attentive public and second most reliable by the non-attentives) and the news media, whom 22% to 27% of the attentive public viewed as "very" reliable. Whereas television news was seen by the non-attentives as more reliable than newspapers, radio, or magazines, it was the least reliable of the four media according to the attentives. However, television was still a more trusted source of information about foreign affairs than political leaders (other than the president) or "friends."

CONSEQUENCES OF GREATER PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

As we have seen, involvement in foreign policy is low. Indeed, political participation is low generally. In the last three to four years 69% of the public claimed to have voted in a presidential election (and that overstates the actual turnout); 63% to have voted in a local or state election; only 27% to have asked someone to vote for their party or candidate; 23% to have written or spoken to a public official about some *political* issues; 22% to have gone to a political meeting to hear a candidate speak; 18% to have worn a campaign button or displayed a campaign poster; and 14% to have worked for a political party or candidate (actual turnout in the 1976 presidential election was only 54.4%). Of those who had written or spoke to a public official about some political issue, only 18% (4% of the entire public) contacted public officials about an issue concerning foreign affairs.

But we also have seen that the American public and its leaders think that public opinion should have a greater role in determining U.S. foreign policy. If the public is to gain a greater voice in shaping that policy, who are those people likely to be, and what new or different attitudes are they likely to express from those already held by the U.S. foreign policy leadership? We offer some tentative answers to these questions in this final section.

Foreign affairs is and will remain a low saliency issue arena for a large majority of the American public, barring any major commitment of American troops in combat action. If the "public's" participation is to be expanded in the near future, it is not likely to come from that portion of the public interested in different issues or from those who feel reluctant to participate because they know little about foreign affairs. Rather, the citizens likely to be heard will be those who have a record of prior political participation, who are attentive to foreign policy, and who know something about it. In a sense, they likely will be those whom we have called the "attentive public." What the attentive public thinks about foreign affairs often lies somewhere between their less attentive compatriots and the foreign policy leadership of the U.S.

This report has made a number of comparisons between public and leaders and attentives and non-attentives. We noted that the relative importance of foreign policy goals differed little between the public (both attentive and non-attentive parts) and U.S. foreign policy leaders. Attentives, non-attentives, and leaders also shared similar perceptions of the general agenda they see facing the U.S. Here, inflation was viewed as a problem greater than any single foreign policy issue, though public and leaders were both likely to cast anxious eyes toward events in the Middle East. Concern over the decline of the dollar was shared by non-attentive, attentive, and leader groups.

Where segments of public and leadership differed was in the degree to which the U.S. should involve itself in world affairs, but majorities of each group agreed that the U.S. role should be an active one. As one moves along the continuum of involvement from non-attentive to leader, however, one also moves along a continuum of increasing willingness to commit the U.S. to world affairs, both in the abstract and in more specific instances of conflict in places around the globe.

In several notable instances, however, the attentives did not fall between non-attentives and leaders. Unlike the non-attentives and U.S. foreign policy leaders, the attentive public supported the expansion of defense spending and manifest a greater concern about the military strength of the U.S. vis-a-vis the Soviet Union.

Support for more defense spending is relatively high among the attentive public and relatively low among the leaders. The same is true on United States-Soviet relations. This raises the question as to how the attentives are getting information that the United States is falling behind and leaders are getting information that it is not. Is the difference in perception due to ideology or to information? The answer to this is not clear from the data.

Differences were to be found between and among these three segments of the American public, but it seems impressive —especially in light of divisions that only recently tore at the fabric of the Republic —that the public and its leaders did not fundamentally disagree about the shape and direction of American foreign policy.

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AMERICAN PUBLIC OPINION AND U.S. FOREIGN POLICY 1983

Edited by John E. Rielly

The Chicago Council on Foreign Relations

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Introduction

The survey on which this report is based was conducted in November and December of 1982, midway in the first term of President Ronald Reagan. It came during a period of prolonged recession, the worst since the end of World War II. Like most of his predecessors for the past two decades, President Reagan found himself embattled midway in his term. Although the next presidential election is a full two years off, he already faces new challengers within his own party as well as from the Democratic opposition. The governmental instability that has plagued American society since the end of the Eisenhower era is likely to continue into the mid-1980's if not beyond.

This is the third public opinion survey and analysis sponsored by the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations. It is being released exactly eight years after the first which was conducted in November and December of 1975, and four years after the second which was done in the same months of 1978. The results of both surveys were summarized in two reports published in March of those years entitled "American Public Opinion and U.S. Foreign Policy, 1974" and "American Public Opinion and U.S. Foreign Policy, 1979". In the four year period since the last survey, we witnessed the continued expansion of Soviet military power and demonstrations in Afghanistan and Poland of the Soviet government's determination to maintain its power in countries on it borders. At the same time American power and influence continued to wane in certain areas. The fall of the Shah of Iran, on whom the U.S. relied to maintain stability in the Persian Gulf for over two decades, demonstrated the impotence of the American government to protect its interests in the Persian Gulf or its citizens in Khomeni's Iran.

The election of Governor Ronald Reagan was due in part to the widespread perception of continuing American weakness in a post-Vietnam world, to failure to stop either the Soviet military buildup or the extension of Soviet military political and diplomatic influence in Southwest Asia and Western Europe.

The four-year period also witnessed a change in the developed world from a decade of economic stagnation to one of actual recession, leading to the highest unemployment and bankruptcy rate experienced in Europe and North America in forty years. As the recession diminished the world demand for oil in the early 1980's, world oil prices declined and the effectiveness of the OPEC cartel eroded. As the recession persisted, economic issues increasingly dominated the international politics of the OECD countries. Commercial competition between North America and Europe and Japan intensified and rising protectionism in all three areas threatened to jeopardize the competitive world trading system that had developed over the past three decades. Following years of high interest rates at home, the dollar rebounded in foreign currency markets in 1981 and 1982, increasing in value as much as seventy percent against the French franc and significant if smaller percentages against other leading world currencies. By the beginning of 1983, the stability of the private banking system of the OECD countries was threatened by the huge debts accumulated by a few large, middle-class, and newly industrialized countries such as Brazil, Argentina and Mexico, which by 1983 were unable to meet their debt repayment obligations.

Although economic issues occupied a great deal of attention during this period, the eruption of war in Lebanon in 1982 was a grim reminder of Middle East volatility and the persistence of seemingly irreconcilable conflicts. It also brought a need for the United States to continue to play a large role — some thought a larger role — in preserving the stability of that area.

One of the central questions of this survey, as of the two previous ones, is the extent to which the American public and its leaders continue to support the active involvement of the U.S. overseas. The question of the role of the U.S. in the world remains central to this study. In addition, we sought to address such issues as the relationship between domestic and foreign policy priorities, the appropriate response to the increasing diplomatic and political as well as military reach of the Soviet Union, the shift in foreign policy priorities, and the roles of various individuals and institutions in the implementation of foreign policy.

The Chicago Council on Foreign Relations commissioned the Gallup Organization to conduct this survey of both the public and national leaders. The popular survey involved a stratified, systematic national sample of 1,546 respondents, representing Americans 18 years of age and older. Questions were weighted to eliminate sampling distortion with respect to age, sex or race. The field work for this part of the study was conducted between October 29 and November 6, 1982. The leadership sample included 341 individuals representing Americans in senior positions with knowledge of international affairs. We chose roughly equal proportions from the national political and governmental world, including senators and representatives (members of the Foreign Relations, International Relations and Armed Services Committees) and officials with international responsibilities from the State, Treasury, Defense and other departments. Participants were also drawn from the business community (chairmen, international vice presidents of large corporations as well as leaders of business associations); communications field (editors and publishers of major newspapers, wire service executives, television broadcasters); from education (presidents and scholars from major colleges and universities); and foreign policy institutes.

A smaller number of leaders was also drawn from national unions, churches, voluntary organizations and other ethnic organizations. Interviews in the leadership survey were conducted from early November to mid-December 1982.

All interviewing, collating and tabulating was done through the facilities of the Gallup Organization Incorporated. The design and contents of the questionnaire were prepared by the editor and the following consultants: Bernard Cohen, Professor of Political Science, University of Wisconsin at Madison; Arthur Cyr, Vice President and Program Director of the

Chicago Council on Foreign Relations; Benjamin Page, Associate Professor of Political Science, the University of Chicago; William Schneider, Senior Fellow of the American Enterprise Institute; and Glenn Dempsey, Computer Programmer of the National Opinion Research Center.

We have benefited from a preliminary analysis by the Gallup Organization. The analysis and interpretation of data presented in this report represent the joint efforts of the above group working with the editor. Once again we have published the analysis of the data as quickly as possible after the field work was completed. The response to the earlier reports confirms our judgment that the advantages of a brief but timely summary analysis outweigh the disadvantages of being unable to do a comprehensive study in so short a period of time. The report should be considered in that light. The data derived from this study will be placed on deposit with the Inter-Unviersity Consortium for Political and Social Research at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, and the Roper Center for Public Opinion in Storrs, Connecticut, and will be available to scholars.

I want to take this opportunity to express my thanks and appreciation to my principal collaborators: Bernard Cohen, Arthur Cyr, Benjamin Page, Glenn Dempsey and William Schneider. Special thanks are due Nora Dell, Editor and Director of Publications of the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations, who once again played a critical role in every stage of the project, arranged for the design and layout of the report, and was responsible for all aspects of the publication. Special thanks also to Nancy Kickert and Linda Crance, who displayed skill and persistence in putting the manuscript on the word processor and seeing it through to completion. Thanks also are due to members of the Council staff who volunteered their help in various stages in production of this report, and especially to Norma Newkirk and Cindy Unger.

On behalf of the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations I want to express our gratitude to the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, and especially to President John Corbally and Executive Vice President James Furman, for providing the entire financing of the project, including the preparation, publication and dissemination of this report.

John E. Rielly
President
The Chicago Council
on Foreign Relations
February 15, 1983

Summary Findings

Despite the tumultuous world events of the past four years—the seizure of American hostages in Iran, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the failure of the SALT II treaty, declaration of martial law in Poland, the war in the Falkland Islands, the Israeli invasion of Lebanon, worldwide hyperinflation followed by worldwide recession — the foreign policy attitudes of the American public have maintained a basic stability. This continuity is all the more surprising because the period 1978-1982 witnessed the election to the presidency of Ronald Reagan, who pledged to set the nation on a new path in foreign as well as domestic policy. Yet there is no evidence of any fundamental reorientation of the American public's foreign policy values or priorities during the past four years.

Certainly, the shifts in public opinion between 1978 and 1982 were less substantial than the shifts between 1974 and 1978, when the views of the American public became more conservative and nationalistic. In The Chicago Council on Foreign Relations' 1978 and 1982 surveys of American public opinion and U.S. foreign policy, cross-sections of the national electorate were asked to assess the importance of 13 different foreign policy goals, including "containing communism," "promoting and defending human rights in other countries," and "helping to improve the standard of living of less-developed nations." In 11 out of the 13 queries, the data showed no significant change.

The American public in 1982 is concerned about the same foreign policy priorities that it was concerned about in 1978—peace and strength. Between 1974 and 1981, the public grew increasingly insecure about the perceived growing military imbalance between the United States and the Soviet Union. This preoccupation with military security became a major obsession following the events in Iran and Afghanistan at the end of 1979, and it played no small role in the 1980 presidential election. One of the things Ronald Reagan has accomplished in office, this study shows, is to give the American public a greater sense of military security, no doubt in part because of his administration's unprecedented peacetime increases in military spending. On the other hand, the public now exhibits a growing preoccupation with peace and arms control — also as a result of the administration's defense buildup as well as the atmosphere of increased tension between the United States and the Soviet Union.

While the American public shares the Reagan administration's paramount concern with East-West relations and military security, the data show important disparities between public opinion and administration policies in key-issue areas, including defense spending, arms control, foreign aid, detente, and trade policy. The survey results also reveal that, while the Reagan administration can depend on the support of influential elite groups on some issues (including foreign economic aid and free trade), there are many issues on which elite opinion differs sharply from administration policy and is closer to the views of the mass public (arms control and detente, for example).

Those are some of the principal conclusions of The Chicago Council on Foreign Relations' 1983 study of American public opinion and U.S. foreign policy. This study is based on two parallel surveys:

1) personal interviews with a nationwide sample of 1,547 American adults, conducted by the Gallup Organization in late October and November 1982, and
2) personal and telephone interviews with a leadership sample of 341 prominent individuals from government, international business, labor, academia, the mass media, religious institutions, private foreign policy organizations, and special interest groups, conducted during November and December 1982.

The 1982 surveys were the third in a sequence of studies of American public opinion and U.S. foreign policy sponsored by The Chicago Council on Foreign Relations. Previous public and leadership surveys were conducted in 1974 and 1978.

ECONOMIC CONCERNS AND SELF-INTEREST

The basic reason for the continuity in foreign-policy attitudes is the continuity of the public's major concerns from 1978 to 1982. In 1982 as in 1978, economic issues were given top priority by both the public and the leaders as the biggest problems facing the country. The nature of these economic concerns did shift in 1982, however, with unemployment displacing inflation as the number-one national problem.

In a time of deep recession, preoccupation with domestic economic issues reinforces the concern for national self-interest that was evident four years ago. Thus, protecting the jobs of American workers, keeping the value of the dollar high, and securing adequate supplies of energy were rated much higher in importance than such altruistic foreign policy objectives as promoting democracy, defending human rights in other countries, and protecting weaker nations against foreign aggression.

INTERNATIONALISM

In line with this persistent concern for economic self-interest, 1982 results show a continuing erosion of the post-World War II public consensus that the national interest requires active participation by the United States in world affairs. Only a bare majority of the public now holds the opinion that such international activism is best for the future of the country while over a third now say that it would be better if the United States "stayed out" of world affairs. On the other hand, the nation's leaders remain virtually unanimous in support of an active U.S. world role.

The view that the U.S. plays a less important and less powerful role as a world leader today, as compared with the past, continues to grow among the mass public and to characterize a majority of the leaders. However, most Americans do not really prefer it that way. Only a small minority of the public and very few leaders would like to see the United States play a less important role as a world leader in the future. The prevailing view in both groups is that the U.S. should play a *more* important role in the future.

The generally low level of internationalism is reflected in the public's limited support of foreign aid. Barely half of the public favors the idea of giving economic aid to other countries while majorities oppose giving military aid or even selling military equipment. Of seven federal government spending programs tested, foreign economic aid and foreign military aid were the least popular. As in previous years, majorities of the public wanted to cut back spending on both.

AREAS OF VITAL CONCERN

A mood of security-consciousness can be seen in areas of the world where the public perceives U.S. interest to have increased over the past four years. They include neighboring countries in North and South America, our principal European and Asian allies, and a communist country threatened with Soviet intervention (Poland). On the other hand, the public's interest in the People's Republic of China and most Third World countries has declined.

The public sees the United States as having vital interests in four specific areas of the world: 1) Western Hemisphere countries, for reasons of geographic proximity; 2) Western Europe, where the U.S. has strong cultural and economic ties and where our security interests vis-à-vis the Soviet Union are clearest; 3) Japan, our principal trading partner, economic rival, and Asian security outpost; and 4) the Middle East, including Israel, Egypt, and the oil-producing Arab countries. The leaders tend to have a broader view of our vital interests, although the rank-ordering of countries is roughly the same.

Public concern over Saudi Arabia was especially striking. Presumably because of that country's abundant oil reserves, Saudi Arabia was perceived as one of the top countries in terms of vital interest to the United States. The coming to power of communists in Saudi Arabia was considered more of a threat to American interests than communists coming to power in France, Iran, El Salvador, or Taiwan. A substantial proportion of the public would be willing to send U.S. troops if the Arabs cut off all oil shipments to the United States. A quarter of the public and a majority of the leaders would be willing to send troops if Iran invaded Saudi Arabia. Clearly, the Middle East is now seen as an area of major U.S. interest in the world, along with our neighbors and traditional allies.

THE MIDDLE EAST

The 1982 results indicate some slippage in public favorability toward Israel and a significant drop in favorability toward Prime Minister Menachem Begin. The explanation lies in a widespread negative assessment of Israeli policies, particularly among the leaders. A majority of the public and two-thirds of the leaders disapproved of Israel's recent actions in Lebanon. President Reagan's Middle East peace plan, which was rejected by the Israeli government, is favored two-to-one by the American public, as is formation of a separate and independent Palestinian state. A strong majority of the public feels that the U.S. should require that all weapons sent to Israel be used for defensive purposes only. About one-third of the public and one-quarter of the leaders want to see U.S. military aid and arms sales to Israel decreased or stopped altogether.

On the other hand, Americans continue to show a strong margin of sympathy for Israel over the Arabs. And despite recent events in Lebanon, PLO Leader Yassir Arafat ranks far below Menachem Begin in personal popularity. The long-term sympathy trends in the Middle East show that the 1982 events in Lebanon did have an effect on American public opinion. Sympathy for the Arab cause is now somewhat higher than it was before June 1982. On the other hand, sympathy for Israel, which had gone up in early 1982, returned to a relatively high level toward the end of the year. Overall, public opinion now shows more sympathy for both sides than has been the case in the past.

EAST-WEST RELATIONS

Distrust of the Soviet Union remains strong. When respondents were asked to express their favorability toward 24 different countries on a "feeling thermometer," the Soviet Union came out at the bottom of the list, having dropped 8° since 1978. Willingness to send troops if the Soviet Union invaded Western Europe or Japan went up significantly in the mass public. Former Soviet Premier Leonid Brezhnev was rated very low in personal favorability, above only Yassir Arafat and the Ayatollah Khomeini. Americans maintained their commitment to the NATO alliance at a steady level. And there was somewhat more support than in 1978 for restricting U.S.-Soviet trade and cultural contacts.

This negativism tended to apply specifically to the Soviet Union and not necessarily toward all communist countries. While Cuba's favorability rating was almost as low as the Soviet Union's and had also gone down since 1978, ratings for Poland and the People's Republic of China were signficantly higher and had tended to improve. There was no change in the low perceived importance of "containing communism" as a foreign policy goal or in the reluctance to send U.S. troops if North Korea invaded South Korea or if the People's Republic of China invaded Taiwan. And most Americans did not perceive a "great threat" to U.S. interests if communists came to power in France, Iran, El Salvador, or Taiwan.

Most measures of peaceful cooperation between the United States and the Soviet Union retain considerable popularity. Thus, a majority of the public continues to support arms control agreements, cultural and educational exchanges, and joint efforts to solve energy problems while majorities oppose grain embargoes and prohibitions against scientific exchanges. However, a majority of Americans does favor limiting sales of advanced U.S. computers to the Soviet Union, and a plurality supports restrictions on U.S.-Soviet trade.

The general view of the Soviet Union remains one of wariness. Long-term polling evidence indicates that anti-Soviet feeling increased significantly in the United States between 1974 and 1981. This antipathy, perhaps generated by fear of nuclear confrontation, appears to have gone down since the height of the Iran and Afghanistan crises, but the level of distrust remains quite high. Concern over U.S.-Soviet relations is also quite high. Among foreign policy leaders, "relations with the Soviet Union" now predominates as the leading foreign policy problem facing the country. In the mass public, concern over nuclear war has risen markedly.

MILITARY ISSUES

Some of the most pronounced shifts in public opinion over the three Chicago Council surveys have been on the issue of defense spending. Between 1974 and 1978, support for increased defense spending grew substantially. In 1974 sentiment for cutting back the defense budget outweighed sentiment for increasing it by as much as three-to-one. In 1978 there was much more sentiment for expanding rather than cutting back the defense budget. The 1982 data indicate a reversal of this pro-defense trend. Support for increasing the defense budget has fallen by about ten percentage points since 1978 while the desire to cut military spending has grown proportionately. The attitudes of leaders have moved in the same direction on this issue.

One obvious explanation is, of course, President Reagan's budget policies during the first two years of his administration. Polls show that the public's demand for more military spending — that is, for a stronger national defense — reached a peak in January 1981 when Ronald Reagan took office. Reagan immediately set about substantially increasing the military budget. By November 1981, pressure for higher defense spending had dropped by about half. With the onset of a major recession, deep cuts in domestic social spending, and a federal budget deficit approaching $200 billion, public opinion—and leadership opinion—were no longer in support of the administration's plan for continuing to make major increases in the military budget. It should be noted, however, that most Americans at the end of 1982 were not in favor of *decreasing* the defense budget either. The prevailing sentiment in public opinion is to keep defense spending about the same.

Another factor behind declining pressure for higher military spending is the belief that the U.S. and the Soviet Union are moving closer to military parity. A plurality of the public and a substantial majority of leaders now think that the U.S. and the Soviet Union are about equal militarily. In 1978 the desire to increase defense spending was very strongly related to concern about the Soviet Union as a military threat to the United States. That linkage is much weaker today. Thus, the perception of U.S. military inferiority, which contributed to public and elite pressure for highter defense spending a few years ago, seems to have abated.

ARMS CONTROL

What has grown, however, is concern over the possibility of war. In the 1978 survey, so few respondents spontaneously mentioned war or nuclear war as foreign policy concerns that this response was not even separately reported. In 1982, however, over 10% mentioned war as a major issue while the proportion concerned about the nuclear arms race nearly doubled. Together, one-quarter of the public now mentions either war or the arms race as the biggest foreign policy problem facing the country, making this general issue the public's largest single foreign policy concern.

Consequently, survey results show substantial public and leadership support for arms control measures. Three-quarters of the public and almost all of the leaders favored arms control agreements between the U.S. and the Soviet Union. Respondents also were asked about "a mutual, verifiable freeze on nuclear weapons." Over half of the public and four-fifths of the leaders felt that the U.S. should stop building nuclear weapons if the Soviets also agree to stop. Only minorities of the public and very small minorities of the leaders felt either that the U.S. should stop building nuclear weapons even if the Soviets do not or that the U.S. should continue to build nuclear weapons no matter what the Soviets do. Moreover, strong majorities among both the public and the leaders favored a freeze "right now if the Soviets would agree." This position was much more popular than the Reagan administration's view that there should be a freeze "only after the U.S. builds up its nuclear weapons more."

INTERVENTIONISM

When asked about U.S. military intervention overseas, the public revealed a sharpened capacity to distinguish situations that involve our vital interests from those that do not. A majority of the public and of the leaders would be willing to send U.S. troops if either Japan or Western Europe were invaded by the Soviet Union. In the case of the public, support for sending troops in both cases is significantly higher than it was four years ago. The Middle East is another area where vital interests are widely perceived. Though still short of a majority, increasing proportions of the public and of the leaders would be willing to send U.S. troops if the Arabs cut off oil shipments to the U.S. or if Arab forces invaded Israel. Most leaders also favored the use of force if Iran invaded Saudi Arabia.

There was much less support for the use of U.S. troops in areas not perceived to be vital to U.S. interests, nor did support for interventionism increase in those areas. Few Americans favored sending troops if South Africa invaded Angola, if the People's Republic of China invaded Taiwan, or if the government of El Salvador were about to be defeated by "leftist rebels." Troop involvement in these circumstances was even less popular among leaders. Notably, the public was more willing to send U.S. troops if the Soviet Union invaded Poland, and leaders were more favorable to intervention if North Korea invaded South Korea.

ASSESSMENT OF U.S. FOREIGN POLICY

The self-image of American foreign policy continues to be ambivalent. Two-thirds of the public and almost seven-eighths of the leaders believe, as they did four and eight years ago, that the U.S. has been a force for good in the world since World War II. On the other hand, almost three-quarters of the public continues to feel that "the Vietnam war was more than a mistake; it was fundamentally wrong and immoral" — a proportion unchanged since 1978. Leaders continue to be divided on this point, as they were four years ago. Moreover, Americans' sense of self-esteem continues to deteriorate. Increasing percentages of the public and the leaders feel that the U.S. is less respected in the world than it was a decade ago.

The survey also uncovered some evidence of populist and anti-establishment pressures on U.S. foreign policy. The public tended to feel that public opinion and Congress should play a more important role in determining foreign policy. The data also showed a shift among both the public and the leaders toward a preference for Congress to play a stronger role vis-à-vis the president in determining foreign policy. At the same time, both samples moved in the direction of endorsing a weaker role for the military in the foreign policy process.

Finally, it is significant that the news media are regarded as more reliable sources of information on foreign policy than the presidency, the State Department, and foreign policy leaders in Congress. Generally, institutions that are thought of as more directly responsive to the people — Congress, public opinion, and the media — are more widely trusted than such elite institutions as the president, the secretary of state, the State Department, and the military. The public would like to "popularize" foreign policy by seeing the first group of institutions play a larger role.

GAP BETWEEN THE ADMINISTRATION, LEADERS, AND PUBLIC

The 1982 survey gives ample evidence of gaps between public opinion and leadership opinion, on the one hand, and between both groups and administration policy on the other. The gap between the public and the leaders is basically one of internationalism. The leaders are much more supportive of an active U.S. role in the world, including foreign economic and military aid. In most cases the leaders are more likely to support sending U.S. troops to intervene in crisis situations, especially where our vital interest is clear. Similarly, the leadership stratum is more likely to see communism as a threat in areas where the U.S. has a strong vital interest and less likely to see communism as a threat in peripheral areas. But the leaders are not necessarily more hard-line than the public. They tend to be more favorable to U.S.-Soviet cooperation, to arms control agreements, and to normalizing relations with Cuba.

A pronounced difference occurs over the issue of protectionism. The public continues to give majority support to tariffs and restrictions on imports while leadership opinion is strongly opposed to protectionism. The point is that the leadership group is more willing to support all kinds of international commitments whether they are cooperative, like trade and treaties, or confrontational, like troop intervention.

The survey also reveals significant gaps between public opinion and administration policies in many areas. The public does not approve of foreign military or economic aid or even sales of military equipment to other countries. Most Americans support an immediate nuclear freeze if the Soviets agree, and favor efforts to normalize relations with Cuba. The public did not support President Reagan's initial efforts to apply sanctions against our allies to persuade them not to help the Soviets build a natural gas pipeline to Western Europe. And the public is favorable to many forms of cooperation with the Soviet Union. The gap between the public and the administration is especially pronounced on spending issues. Public opinion has grown more supportive of spending for such domestic social programs as aid to education, highway expenditures, and welfare and relief programs; but sentiment for expanding the defense budget has diminished. This is precisely opposite of the direction the Reagan administration has been urging.

It also should be noted that the public rates government's handling of most recent foreign policy crises—including the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the declaration of martial law in Poland, the situation in El Salvador, the Israeli invasion of Lebanon, and the seizure of U.S. hostages in Iran—as fair-to-poor. A majority gives the government positive marks in only one situation, the war between Great Britain and Argentina over the Falkland Islands, where the United States was only minimally involved.

Can the administration rely on the leadership stratum for support in situations where public opinion is not favorable? The evidence indicates that foreign policy leaders stand with the administration only in a few areas, most notably foreign aid, certain cases of troop intervention, and free trade. In many other areas—including arms control, defense spending, human rights, cooperation with the Soviet Union, restrictions on CIA activity, and relations with Cuba—leadership sentiment is even less supportive of administration policy than is public opinion.

I. Priority of Foreign Policy

We may begin this analysis of public opinion and foreign policy by first asking how important foreign policy issues are for both the public and leaders in the United States. How does the priority attached to foreign affairs compare with that accorded domestic policy issues? How closely do people follow these different sorts of issues — both generally and in specific terms? To put the matter a little differently, what is their "map" of public affairs, and how and where does foreign policy fit into it? Where, in a time of serious economic troubles all over the world, is their international horizon?

ATTENTIVENESS TO FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Four years ago we noted that the decade of the 1970s was characterized by many commentators as "quiescent and inward-looking." That description still applies at the beginning of the 1980s. Following a generation of intense international activism after World War II, a generation in which the primacy of foreign policy was barely challenged in a rich and growing economy, the "natural order" seems fundamentally to have shifted. The primacy of foreign policy is now regularly challenged, in reaction not only to the Vietnam war but equally to the battering of the American and the world economies. Simply put, the economic recession that engulfed the United States and much of the world in the early 1980s has entrenched the nation's preoccupation with domestic affairs. That will be evident throughout this survey.

With the perspective of eight years, we can see (Figure I-1) that the American public is more interested in local news than any other kind. And specifically its interest in local news remains significantly greater than in news about other countries or in news concerning America's relations with other countries. The general pattern of stated interest across all fields of news is essentially unchanged from 1978.

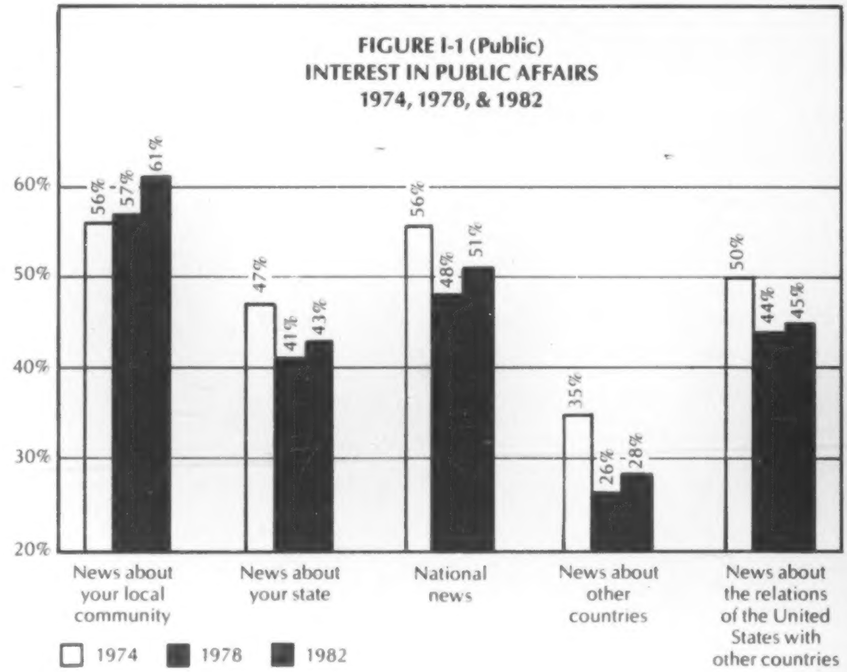

FIGURE I-1 (Public)
INTEREST IN PUBLIC AFFAIRS
1974, 1978, & 1982

It is interesting to compare this general interest in news of different types with the expressed interest in news about specific issues and events. Two important differences emerge from this comparison:

1) Overall, the proportion of the population who follow specific events in the news tends to be somewhat smaller than the proportion who declare a general interest in such news. For example, while 45% declare that they are "very interested" in news about relations with other countries, only 17% say they have followed news about our trade problems with Japan "very closely," and only 22% say the same about negotiations on strategic arms limitations. While 51% declare that they are "very interested" in national news, which was matched in the case of news about President Reagan's economic policy (51% said they followed it "very closely"), only 24% said they followed the 1982 Congressional elections that closely.
2) The differences between interest in foreign and domestic (national) news tend to shrink along with the contraction of interest in specific news items. That is to say, some of the professed disinterest in foreign affairs seems to disappear when it comes to specific news or events. For example, while 24% say they followed the 1982 Congressional elections very closely, similar or larger proportions claimed to have followed "very closely" events in Poland (26%), strategic arms limitations negotiations (22%), and the Middle East situation (33%).

On the basis of responses to the above questions, we have constructed an index of attentiveness to foreign affairs news. Those who scored in the top third on the additive scale of attentiveness we call the "attentive public," and we will from time to time draw attention to the differences between the views of this group and the views of the medium and low attentives on particular subjects. In 1978, 21% of the sample were among the attentive public. In 1982, on an index composed of the same general questions (interest in news about other countries and in news about our relations with other countries) and a different set of specific issues that one could follow in the news, the size of the attentive public was virtually identical—22%.

FOREIGN POLICY AND THE NATIONAL AGENDA

When we asked people about the biggest problems confronting the country today, it is not surprising that economic issues came out on top, just as they have in our two prior surveys. This has been true for a decade now, since the end of the Vietnam war. But for three decades prior to 1973, according to a series of Gallup polls, foreign policy issues dominated public concerns.

Overall, Table I-1 shows not only the continued dominance of economic problems but also a small rise in the responses in *both* the economic *and* the foreign policy categories. In the economic category the net increase is attributable to 18% of the respondents who expressed an undifferentiated concern over the state of the economy. In the foreign affairs category it is due to 9% of the respondents who expressed wide-ranging concerns about the problems caused by nuclear weapons.

TABLE I-1. Most important problems

"What do you feel are the two or three biggest problems facing the country today?"[1]

	Public		Leaders	
	1982	1978	1982	1978
ECONOMY				
Unemployment	64%[2]	19%	53%	25%
Inflation	35	67	19	85
Taxes	6	18	3	6
Economy, unspecified	18	na	54	na
ENERGY	3	11	2	23
GOVERNMENT				
Big government	2	6	1	10
Government spending	5	9	12	13
Corruption	4	6	2	2
FOREIGN POLICY				
World peace	6	3	7	5
Middle East	2	1	2	4
Too much foreign aid	2	5	1	*
National defense	3	5	9	21
International economy, balance of payments	21	4	60	10
U.S. foreign policy	8	5	13	10
Nuclear war/freeze	9	na	20	na
SOCIAL PROBLEMS				
Crime	16	9	3	2
Drug abuse	3	1	1	1
Welfare abuse	3	8	1	3
Racial problems	2	3	2	4
Environment	2	2	4	4
Immorality	6	2	5	3
Labor unions	2	1	1	1
Abortion	*	1	1	*
SOCIAL WELFARE				
Health insurance	1	5	1	7
Elderly	6	4	2	1
Education	2	4	4	3
Poverty	2	3	2	3
Housing	1	*	1	*

*less than ½%

[1] There is a very slight change in the wording of this question in 1982. In 1974 and 1978 we asked respondents to name "the two or three biggest problems facing the country today that you would like to see the federal government do something about." Because the role of the federal government in the solution of national problems has itself increasingly become perceived as a political problem since the 1980 elections, we decided that comparability with prior surveys would be enhanced if we dropped the qualifying phrase "that you would like to see the federal government do something about."

[2] The sum of percentages exceeds 100% because of multiple responses.

Whereas inflation clearly ranked as the biggest problem in 1978, with 67% of the public listing it first, it was just as clearly superseded in 1982 by concern about unemployment, which was mentioned by 64% compared to 19% four years earlier. Concern about inflation came in second, with 35%, and an undifferentiated concern for the problems of the economy came in third, with 18%. As Table I-1 indicates, there is no question that unemployment has emerged by far as the dominant issue at the end of 1982. In 1978 the average annual inflation rate was 7.7% and rising; in 1982 it was about 5%. In 1978 the average annual unemployment rate was 6%; in 1982 it was nearly 11% and its direction was unclear.

Among opinion leaders the same preoccupation with economic issues in general, and unemployment in particular, is evident, with an undifferentiated concern for the problems of the economy and unemployment virtually tied (at 54% and 53%, respectively). Concern about inflation was fourth at 19%, a dramatic drop from 85% in 1978.

On foreign policy issues, the overall category "foreign policy" showed an increase in the number of the public who listed it as a major issue (from 4% to 6%) while concern about defense declined (2%) as did concern about "too much foreign aid" (3%). Concern about nuclear war and nuclear threat emerged as a major item here and throughout the survey. In general foreign policy problems ran far behind domestic problems in the public's estimation. The gap was (predictably) narrower for the foreign policy leaders, but even among the leaders economic problems outweighed foreign policy problems by two-by-one. The largest single foreign policy problem for both groups of respondents was the nuclear arms question, though the leaders were twice as likely as the general public to see it as a problem. It was followed closely on both sides by a general, undifferentiated concern for U.S. foreign policy. Significantly, the leaders also recorded a substantial decline (from 21% to 9%) in concern for the problem of national defense. Coupled with the rise in concern for nuclear war, this suggests some re-thinking on the part of the leadership group about the nature of the military problem.

PRIORITIES AMONG GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS

Another way to weigh the relative importance of foreign policy in the thinking of our respondents is to compare the government programs that they would like to see expanded or cut back. For this purpose we listed three foreign policy programs—defense spending and economic and military aid to foreign nations—and four domestic programs — education, highway expenditures, welfare and relief programs, and Social Security. Social Security was added this year and farm subsidies were deleted. Thus, of the seven programs we have a trend line on six. As in past reports, we have calculated an index of support for each program by subtracting the percentage of those who wanted it cut back from the percentage of those who wanted it expanded. Results for all three surveys are shown in Figure I-2, where positive scores—those above the line—indicate net public support for expansion of programs, and negative scores—those below the line—indicate net public desire to cut them back. For example, the score of +43 for Social Security is derived from 49% who wish to see the program expanded and 6% who wish to see it cut back.

FIGURE I-2 (The Public)
EXPAND, CUT BACK FEDERAL PROGRAMS 1974, 1978, 1982

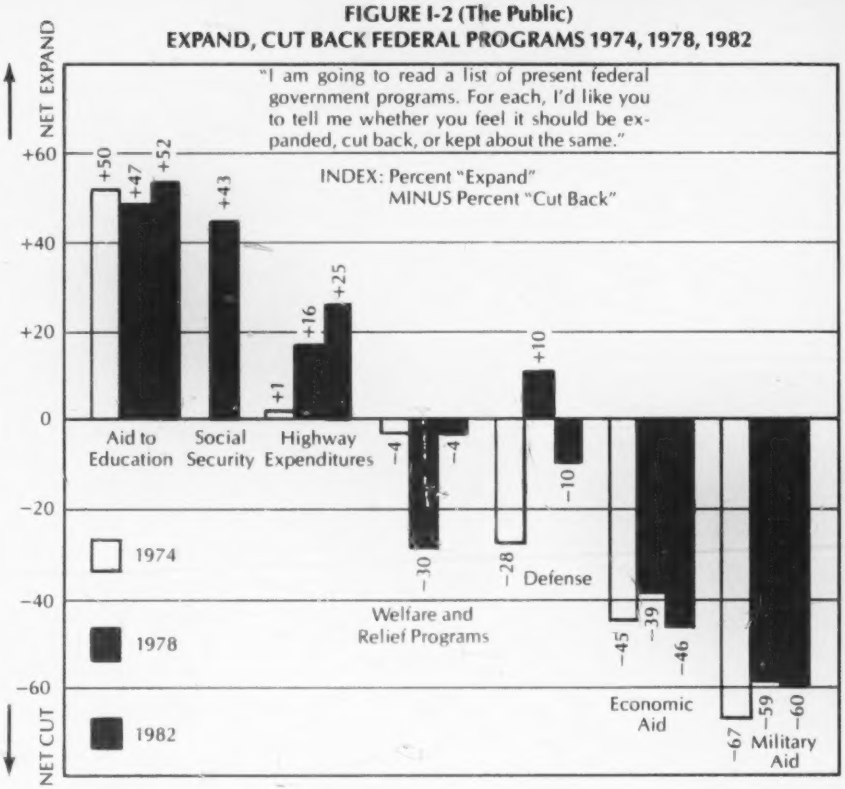

Figure I-2 shows starkly the priority accorded by the public to domestic programs over foreign policy programs. All three foreign policy programs have negative scores (−60, −46, −10); three domestic programs have positive scores (+52, +43, +25); and only one domestic program stands on the minus side (−4), although still above the foreign policy programs. There can be no question that the American people would rather see their government invest in social programs — and even in highways — before investing in defense and foreign military and economic assistance.

A rapid glance at Figure I-2 tells us that both economic and military aid have been the least-favored programs over the eight-year period of these surveys and that there has been little change in public preferences with respect to them over time. Four years ago it looked as though both programs might be climbing slowly in public estimation, but that now appears to have been a temporary fluctuation. Aid to education, on the other hand, continues to enjoy the public's favor.

The Social Security program is new to our list so it lacks comparative data. Highway expenditures have increased in net support: in 1978 the gain was due mostly to a small increase in the proportion of those who would like to expand the program; in 1982 the gain owed more to a decrease in the percent saying "cut back." Welfare programs, which dropped sharply in popularity four years ago, have regained the ground they lost — a development that goes hand-in-hand with the contemporary concern about unemployment.

The change in net public support for defense spending is almost a mirror image of that for welfare and relief programs. In 1978 defense had turned around the net negative evaluation it had suffered since the Vietnam war; indeed, President Reagan came into office with a pledge to increase defense spending to make up for the years during which it had lost public favor. But by 1982 the figures of 1978 were reversed. In 1978, 34% wanted to expand defense spending and 24% wanted to cut it back (a net +10): in 1982, 24% wanted to expand it and 34% wanted to cut it back (a net −10). This survey suggests a number of causes for that volatility: concern about the state of the economy, which must include concern about the large budget deficits; growing concern about the threat of nuclear war; growing realization of the impact that defense spending was having on more favored social programs; and, of course, growing realization that by 1982 President Reagan had already expanded defense spending by a substantial amount.

II. Foreign Policy Goals: Perceptions and Performance

This survey shows the same kinds of ambivalence and apparent inconsistency at work among the American people that were revealed in prior surveys by The Chicago Council on Foreign Relations. Elsewhere in this report there is evidence of the continuing priority given to domestic affairs, especially to the domestic economy, over foreign affairs. But we also find in this survey evidence that the American people have not lost their conviction that the world is a place both of danger and of opportunity and that both of these prospects require specific and continuing American involvement. While the level of these commitments is not as high as it once was, there has been little change over the past four years in the ingredients that make up the orientation of Americans to the world around them. Indeed, given the enormous pull of the nation's domestic economic problems, the stability in the perception of foreign policy problems and in the importance attached to specific foreign policy goals is remarkable and much more impressive than the changes that have taken place.

INVOLVEMENT IN WORLD AFFAIRS

One of these changes, and one of the elements of contradiction, is found in Table II-1. There we can see some evidence of a slow retreat on the part of the American people from their earlier postwar judgment that the national interest required active participation in world affairs as well as an increase in the proportion who are uncertain about the best course for the country to take.[1] While only a bare majority of the public now believes that such international activism is best for the country, it is significant that there has been no erosion of the convictions of the nation's leaders: 98% of the leadership sample are committed to the judgment that the U.S. should take an active part in world affairs. Education is a powerful determinant of the public's attitudes on this issue: 73% of the college educated, but only 38% of the grade-school educated, believe we should play an active role in the world.

This apparent decline in the public's commitment to "internationalism" is reflected in specific attitudes toward a number of the issues raised in this survey, as we shall see below. But it is *not* reflected in the public's estimate of the role they believe the United States *should* play a decade from now: 71% of those who favor an active part in world affairs think we should then be playing a role "as world leader" at least as important as the one we now play while 72% of those who favor staying out of world affairs feel the same way! If those two questions have substantially the same meaning, they suggest an inconsistency in the public's attitudes; the psychological commitment to international participation is perhaps even stronger than the judgment that it might be in our national interest to disengage.

Further evidence pointing in this same direction is provided by the fact that very substantial minorities (between 25% and 45%) of those who believe we should have taken a *more active* role in each of six recent international events (see Table II-6) *also* believe that it would be better for the future of the country if we were to stay out of international affairs!

This inconsistency and ambivalence reflect not only the competing claims of domestic and foreign policy but also growing strains between the desire to remain powerful and important in the world and the costs and dangers attendant on that objective. These contradictions are evident throughout the survey and not least in the public's perceptions of the major foreign policy problems confronting the country and in the foreign policy goals they see as most important.

PERCEPTION OF FOREIGN POLICY PROBLEMS

Once again we asked our respondents to tell us what they thought were the two or three biggest foreign policy problems confronting the country today.[2] Table II-2 reports the results for the public and leadership samples for both 1982 and 1978.

TABLE II-1. Involvement in world affairs—The Public

*"Do you think it will be best for the future of the country if we take an active part in world affairs or if we stay out of world affairs?"**

	Better if we take an active part		Better if we stay out		Not sure	
	Public	Leaders	Public	Leaders	Public	Leaders
1982	53%	98%	35%	1%	12%	1%
1978	59	97	29	1	12	2
1974	66	na	24	na	10	na
1956	71	na	25	na	4	na
1947	68	na	25	na	7	na

*1947 and 1956 surveys by NORC; 1974 by Louis Harris and Associates; 1978 and 1982 by Gallup Organization.

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[1] It should be pointed out that other surveys cited in John M. Benson, "The Polls: U.S. Military Intervention," *Public Opinion Quarterly* 46, p. 593, show a greater stability since 1973, with approximately two-thirds of those *with opinions* favoring an active part in world affairs and one-third favoring staying out.

TABLE II-2. Major foreign policy problems—1982 and 1978

"What are the two or three biggest foreign policy problems facing the U.S. today?"

	Public		Leaders	
	1982	1978	1982	1978
Middle East	19%	20%	39%	47%
Reduce foreign aid	16	18	1	4
Relations with Soviet Union	15	13	53	46
Balance of trade	13	12	22	19
Arms race	13	7	14	16
War/nuclear war	11	na	13	na
Stronger foreign policy, loss of respect	10	na	18	na
Stay out of other countries' affairs	8	11	1	2
Keeping peace	8	9	17	13
Oil problem	5	9	2	7
Latin America	5	2	21	5
Third World	3	na	17	18
Stronger defense	2	3	7	7
Dealing with communism	2	2	2	6
World economy	2	2	11	7
Western Europe/allies	2	1	14	6
Changing relations with African countries	1	4	2	18
Cuba	1	3	*	3
Improving relations with China	1	3	6	17
Iran crisis	1	1	1	8
Decline of the dollar	*	6	—	7
Human rights	*	1	2	7
Panama Canal	*	1	*	1
Taiwan	*	*	—	6
Vietnam	*	1	*	1

*Indicates less than one-half of 1%.

The overall impression from the public's responses is one of continuity—which is surprising considering the passage of time and the course of events. The four subjects attracting most attention in 1982 are the same as in 1978—and they are in the same rank order: the Middle East, reduction of foreign aid, relations with the Soviet Union, and the balance of trade. Significantly, however, these four were closely joined by a concern for the nuclear arms race, up from 7% to 13%, and the prospects for war, which got too few responses to be reported separately in 1978 but stands at 11% in 1982. If we combine these latter two into a single "problem," it becomes, at 24%, the most important problem from the public's perspective and, at 27%, the third most important problem for the leaders.

Several of these leading problems require some explanation. The Middle East and relations with the U.S.S.R. do not require comment; they have more or less dominated the headlines continuously since 1978. Reducing foreign aid, however, should be understood in the broad sense of reducing the costs to us of other countries' dependence on the United States. Concern with the balance of trade reflects a worry not about [illegible] but about economic competition from foreign countries.

[illegible]

[illegible] are more likely to see the Middle East, relations with the Soviet Union, the arms race, and loss of respect as important problems while those who believe it would be best if we stayed out of world affairs are more likely to see as important problems the reduction of foreign aid and (naturally) staying out of other countries' affairs.

The problems that have risen most significantly in the public's perception are very divergent. On the one hand, 24% of the public expressed concern about the arms race and nuclear war, up from 7% in 1978; but at the same time the proportion of those who are upset by foreign policy weakness and loss of respect doubled, up from 5% to 10%. Significantly, there is no ideological difference on these questions. Conservatives and liberals are troubled in equal measure by both problems.

Changes in the problems that preoccupy the leaders in our sample are more numerous, and the extent of the changes is more substantial. But one would expect both of these developments from that part of the population that pays close and often professional attention to foreign policy problems. The two issues at the top of the leaders' list are the same as in 1978, but their order has changed: relations with the Soviet Union has stepped ahead of the Middle East as the primary problem. Relations with the Soviet Union were perceived as a problem by only 12% of the leaders sampled in 1974; this increased to 46% in 1978 and 53% in 1982. That is as good a measure of the decline of detente as one is likely to find anywhere.

The overriding concern with the Soviet Union seems to affect (or perhaps reflect) the way the leaders look at the broader range of contemporary problems. Relations with China and Africa have declined substantially in importance, replaced by a concern with Latin America and Western Europe, both areas bedeviled by the expansion of Soviet power as well as by the contraction of American power.

The leaders also continue to be concerned with international economic problems. Like the general public, they are troubled by the decline in the competitiveness of the American economy. But unlike the general public, they continue to be alert to economic problems in the Third World, and they show a heightened concern for the problems of the world economy.

The level of foreign policy awareness of the leaders is of course higher than that of the general public in our samples; that [illegible] the leaders are more sensitive to these problems. More important, however, [illegible] potentially more troublesome for the future of American foreign policy, is the fact that — as Table II-2 so clearly shows—the foreign policy concerns of the public and its leaders are not the same. For the leaders, relations with the Soviet Union overshadow all other problems. For the public, a variety of problems are of concern, *including* the Soviet Union and the threat of war. Real or effective leadership will narrow the gulf, of course, although the *capacity* for leadership is itself a function of the size of the gap. But if the nation's leaders and the public at large are marching to somewhat different drummers, Table II-2 also suggests that that is not a new phenomenon.

FOREIGN POLICY GOALS

For the third time, in 1982, the Council survey of the public and its leaders explored the importance people attach to various foreign policy goals. Table II-3 displays the responses for 14 goals from the 2 most recent surveys. For the general public especially, the continuity in attachment to these goals is striking. There has been more movement among the goals of the leadership sample, but even among the leaders there are many instances of continuity over the four-year interval. It is worth noting, however, that for most of these goals, upward of one-third of those members of the public who regard them as "very important" *also* believe that it would be better for the future of the country if we stayed out of world affairs. Attachment to these goals, therefore, while important in a number of ways, cannot be taken automatically to signify a corresponding commitment to internationalism.

The items at both the top and bottom of the list in Table II-3 tell us a great deal about contemporary American orientation to the world. The top three goals on the list, those with the *stronger* attachment, involve essentially domestic values, affecting the state of the economy. The last four goals, those with the *weaker* attachment, involve values that are altruistic. There has been little change from 1978 to 1982, both in the strength of the orientation toward domestic goals and the weakness of the orientation toward altruistic international goals.

"Protecting jobs of American workers" has replaced the "value of the dollar" as the goal most valued by the public. Significantly, this chief foreign policy goal is the same domestic concern as the issue seen as the "biggest problem facing the country today." (See Chapter I, Table I-1) Otherwise, the rank order as well as the degree of attachment remains the same. But there was one addition to the list this year: we sought to ascertain the importance attached to the goal of "matching Soviet military power" since that is such a driving purpose of the Reagan administration. That goal was judged very important by 49% of the general public—8th on a list of 14 and on a par with "defending our allies' security" and "strengthening the United Nations" but considerably below protecting jobs, the value of the dollar, and energy supplies — all "inward-looking" goals. It is also 15 percentage points behind "worldwide arms control." The American people may share the president's concern with the "Soviet problem," but he apparently has not succeeded in getting them fully to share his security-policy priorities, and preferred ways of dealing with that problem. And as we shall point out below, even those who do believe it to be very important to match Soviet military power give strong support to policies of cooperation with the Soviet Union.

For fully half of the goals on the list there

TABLE II-3. Foreign policy goals for the United States—1982 and 1978

"I am going to read a list of possible goals that the United States might have. For each one, please say whether you think that should be a very important foreign policy goal, a somewhat important foreign policy goal, or not an important goal at all."

	Very Important				Somewhat Important				Not Important			
	Public		Leaders		Public		Leaders		Public		Leaders	
	1982	1978	1982	1978	1982	1978	1982	1978	1982	1978	1982	1978
1. Protecting jobs of American workers	77%	78%	43%	34%	17%	15%	46%	57%	3%	3%	10%	7%
2. Keeping up the value of the dollar	71	86	38	73	22	8	50	23	2	2	10	1
3. Securing adequate supplies of energy	70	78	72	88	23	18	27	11	3	2	[illegible]	1
4. Worldwide arms control	64	64	86	81	28	23	12	16	4	4	1	3
5. Containing communism	59	60	44	45	27	24	46	47	8	10	1	[illegible]
6. Combating world hunger	58	59	64	67	33	31	35	31	5	5	1	[illegible]
7. Defending our allies' security	50	50	82	77	39	35	16	21	3	7	1	1
8. Matching Soviet military power	49	*	52	*	34	*	40	*	12	*	[illegible]	*
9. Strengthening the United Nations	48	47	25	26	32	32	47	49	13	13	20	25
10. Protecting interests of American business abroad	44	45	25	26	43	40	66	64	9	9	9	9
11. Promoting and defending human rights in other countries	43	39	41	35	42	40	54	56	9	14	5	8
12. Helping to improve the standard of living in less-developed countries	35	35	55	64	50	47	44	33	11	12	1	3
13. Protecting weaker nations against foreign aggression	34	34	43	30	50	47	52	62	9	10	3	5
14. Helping to bring democratic forms of government to other nations	29	26	23	15	47	44	57	62	17	[illegible]	19	23

*Not asked

was no significant change in the "very important" judgments the leaders made in 1978. These were mainly the "ideological" goals: "containing communism," "combating world hunger," "strengthening the United Nations," "promoting human rights," and "protecting interests of American business abroad."

For the other goals, however, the leaders displayed greater sensitivity to the shifting importance of particular values in a changed foreign policy setting. "Protecting jobs of American workers" was judged very important by 43%, a rise of 9 percentage points, but "keeping up the value of the dollar" dropped by 35 percentage points to 38%. "Worldwide arms control" (86%) and "defending our allies' security" (82%) are at the top of the leaders' list, followed by "securing adequate supplies of energy," which contextually suggests a strategic interest in oil. The leaders judged "matching Soviet military power" to be very important in approximately the same proportion as the general public: 52%, 6th on the list of 14, just below "helping to improve the standard of living in less-developed countries." This ranking is particularly interesting because of the evidence in Table II-2 that the leaders are much more concerned than the general public with the problem posed by Soviet power. The foreign policy leaders, like the general public, apparently define America's security interests in terms other than simply keeping up with the Soviets weapon for weapon or even "containing communism," which was judged very important by only 44% of the leaders. The leaders attach higher priority to arms control and to defending our allies as means of dealing with this problem.

It is interesting to note, finally, that in 1982 as in 1978 the general public attached considerably more importance to "protecting the interests of American business abroad" than the leaders did. Presumably, those interests include selling more goods and thus protecting or creating jobs.

FOREIGN POLICY PERFORMANCE

Let us move now from aspiration to reality, from the judgment of goals in the abstract to evaluation of specific policy proposals and concrete policy performance.

Human rights policy has not succeeded in carving a secure and stable position in practical policy terms. The public still does not recognize human rights as an important foreign policy problem facing the country. Promoting and defending human rights in the abstract increased very slightly as a "very important" goal, from 39% in 1978 to 43% today. Of this minority who deem it very important, more than a third (36%) do *not* believe that we should take a more active role in opposing apartheid in South Africa. The leaders are more consistent on this issue: almost all of the 41% who now believe human rights to be a very important goal think we should be more active in opposing apartheid.

A different statistic reveals even more starkly the limited attachment of both the public and leaders to promoting human rights abroad and the extent to which human rights is subordinated to security considerations when these are made explicit. Only 28% of the public sample would appear to be very favorably disposed to human rights — those who believe it is a "very important" goal *and* who also believe that giving military aid lets dictatorships use their military power against their own people. Of this group of presumed "stalwarts," 62% nonetheless agree that the U.S. "may have to support some military dictators because they are friendly toward us and opposed to the communists." Only 32% of the leaders are found in this subset, and as many as 42% of these also agree that we may have to support some military dictators.

RELATIONS WITH THE U.S.S.R.

Where do the American people stand with respect to policy toward the Soviet Union? What is the practical significance of the foreign policy goals we have discussed in this section? Answer: there is considerable ambivalence in public opinion on the U.S.S.R.—helped along, no doubt, by the belief that the United States has lost its military superiority over that country. (See Table II-4) There is an active concern about the state of relations with the Soviet Union and the state of American and Western security running throughout this survey; but there is also a strong undercurrent of yearning for improvement in relations between the two countries.

The negative elements of American opinion toward the Soviet Union show up in a number of questions: when people were asked to rate countries on a "feeling thermometer," the Soviet Union was at the bottom, with a mean of 26 — lower even than Iran! Brezhnev's temperature was third from the bottom, frozen out only by Arafat and Khomeini. Twenty-six percent believe we should continue to build nuclear weapons regardless of what the Soviets do, and 49% believe we should stop only if the Soviet Union would agree to stop. Seventy-one percent of the public with opinions (80% of the leaders) believe we should maintain our commitment to NATO. And nearly 60% of the public and 80% of the leaders want to limit the sale of advanced computers that have either military or industrial applications to the Soviet Union.

On the other hand, both the public and the leadership group are in favor of reestablishing the conditions—or the benefits — of detente. (See Table II-5) The increased antipathy of the past four years has left its mark on many of these items, but there are still very strong majorities favoring the negotiation of arms control agreements between the two countries, resuming cultural and educational exchanges, and undertaking joint efforts to solve energy problems. And there is little support for prohibiting the exchange of scientists or embargoing the sale of grain to the Soviets. The public is divided on the question of an overall restriction on U.S.-Soviet trade; but the leaders, who showed themselves to be greatly concerned about relations with the Soviet Union, do not favor such restrictions.

With a prudent concern for their own security, the American people — public and leaders alike — want to resolve the "Soviet problem" by cooperating with the Soviet Union rather than pursuing confrontation. The depth of this preference for cooperative measures to reduce tensions is even *more* apparent among that half of the population that believes "matching

TABLE II-4. The military balance—1982

"At the present time, which nation do you feel is stronger in terms of military power, the United States or the Soviet Union–or do you think they are about equal militarily?"

	Public	Leaders
U.S. stronger	21%	20%
U.S.S.R. stronger	29	15
About equal	42	62
Don't know	8	3

TABLE II-5. Relationships with the Soviet Union—1982 and 1978

"Relations between the Soviet Union and the United States have been the subject of disagreement for some time. Please tell me if you favor or oppose the following types of relationships with the Soviet Union."

	% In Favor			
	Public		Leaders	
	1982	1978	1982	1978
Negotiating arms control agreements between the U. S. and the Soviet Union	77%	na	96%	na
Signing another arms agreement to limit some nuclear weapons on both sides	na	71	na	92
Signing an agreement to ban all nuclear weapons on both sides	na	62	na	61
Undertaking joint efforts with the Soviet Union to solve energy problems	64	68	78	90
Limiting the sale of advanced U. S. computers to the Soviet Union	59	51	79	59
Restricting U.S.-Soviet trade	47	39	28	17
Prohibiting the exchange of scientists between the U.S. and the Soviet Union	35	34	18	11
Resuming cultural and educational exchanges between the U.S. and the Soviets	70	na	94	na
Forbidding grain sales to the Soviet Union	28	na	16	na

Soviet military power" is a very important goal: 84% of this group favors negotiating arms control agreements with the Soviets; 75% favors a resumption of educational and cultural exchanges; and 70% favors joint efforts to solve energy problems.

RATING OUR GOVERNMENT

Respondents also were asked to rate the way the government handled a number of international situations in recent years. The results are given in Table II-6. The public shows some capacity to discriminate among these issues, being most negative about the handling of the Iranian hostage crisis, where our involvement was direct and costly, and most positive about the handling of the Falklands war, where our role was limited to an attempt at mediation. These two cases attracted the most attention, as is evident by the relatively few who answered "don't know." On the whole, however, there is little enthusiasm for American conduct on any of these issues. Except for the Falklands war, a majority rated the government's *handling* of all of them as, *at best*, only fair. In all except the Iranian case, the dominant judgment about the extent of *American activity* was that it was "just about right." Only in the Iranian case did a majority think that we should have taken a *more* active role. El Salvador drew the largest proportion (25%) of those who believed we should have taken a *less* active role.

Finally, what kind of self-image has American foreign policy engendered in the American people? Once again the answer is ambivalent. Two-thirds continue to believe, as they did four and eight years ago, that the U.S. has been a force for good in the world since World War II. At the same time, 72% continues to agree with the statement that "the Vietnam war was more than a mistake — it was fundamentally wrong and immoral."

In 1978, 56% of the public and 47% of the leaders thought that the U.S. was less respected in the world than ten years earlier. That sense of esteem deteriorated still further by 1982: 65% of the public and 50% of the leaders now believe that we are less respected than we were a decade ago. In every one of the events listed in Table II-6, those who thought we should have taken a *less* active role are at the same time more likely than others to believe that our respect has declined over the past decade. Since our role in some of these events was minimal to begin with, this is a counter-intuitive finding and additionally suggests inconsistent outlooks in foreign policy.

TABLE II-6. The public's response to the handling of recent foreign policy events–1982

"Here is a list of some important events that have happened to the world during the past few years. How would you rate the way the U.S. government handled each of these situations? Would you say our response was excellent, good, fair, or poor?"

"Do you think the U.S. should have taken a more active role, less active role, or was our role just about right?"

	Rating of Handling of Events					Desired U.S. Role			
	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Don't Know	More	Less	About Right	Don't Know
1. The seizure of U.S. hostages in Iran	7%	27%	25%	37%	4%	56%	4%	35%	5%
2. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan	2	18	30	30	20	29	10	38	23
3. The declaration of martial law in Poland	2	22	33	21	22	24	9	45	22
4. The fighting between the government and the rebels in El Salvador	1	17	26	31	25	14	25	34	27
5. The war between Britain and Argentina over the Falkland Islands	14	40	22	12	12	11	14	62	13
6. The Israeli invasion of Lebanon	4	25	29	24	18	23	15	42	20

III. Political Relationships and Commitments Abroad

VITAL INTERESTS

In 1982, as in 1978, the public saw the U.S. as having vital interests (defined as "important to the U.S. for political, economic, or security reasons") in a wide variety of countries throughout the world. (See Table III-1 and Figure III-1) That our neighbors Canada and Mexico were near the top of the list is not surprising. At the very top of the list was Japan, a distant country with which the United States has vital political, economic, and security ties. Great Britain and West Germany were the two European countries seen as most important to American interests. Both were rated noticeably higher than France, our oldest ally, and Italy. Indeed, Italy was one of only 3 countries out of 22

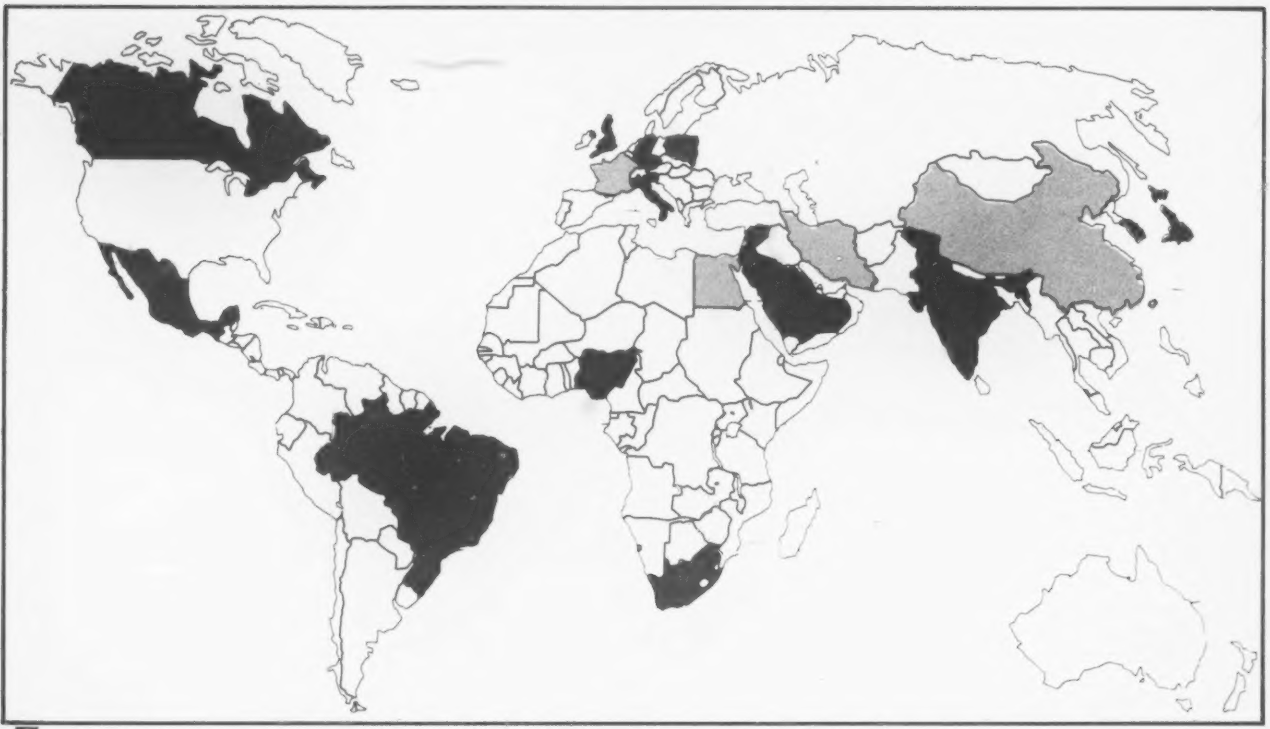
TABLE III-1. Perceptions of U.S. vital interests—1982

"Many people believe that the United States has a vital interest in certain areas of the world and not in other areas. That is, certain countries of the world are important to the U.S. for political, economic or security reasons. I am going to read a list of countries. For each, tell me whether you feel the U.S. does or does not have a vital interest in that country."

	U.S. Has Vital Interest					
	Does		Does Not		Don't Know	
	Public	Leaders	Public	Leaders	Public	Leaders
Japan	82%	97%	9%	2%	9%	1%
Canada	82	95	10	4	8	1
Great Britain	80	97	11	2	9	1
Saudi Arabia	77	93	10	6	13	1
West Germany	76	98	13	1	11	1
Israel	75	92	15	8	10	*
Mexico	74	98	16	1	10	1
Egypt	66	90	19	9	15	1
People's Republic of China	64	87	19	12	17	1
France	58	84	25	15	17	1
Lebanon	55	74	27	23	18	3
Iran	51	60	36	38	13	2
Taiwan	51	44	29	54	20	2
Brazil	45	80	32	18	23	2
South Korea	43	66	36	31	21	3
Poland	43	47	38	50	19	3
Jordan	41	67	32	31	27	2
South Africa	38	54	37	43	25	3
Syria	36	46	33	52	31	2
Italy	35	79	45	20	20	1
Nigeria	32	53	35	44	33	3
India	30	57	44	40	26	3

*Less than one-half of 1%.

FIGURE III-1
PERCEPTIONS OF THE U.S. Vital Interests—1982 (The Public)



■ **—OVER 70%** Japan Canada Great Britain Saudi Arabia West Germany Israel Mexico
░ **—50-70%** Egypt People's Republic of China France Lebanon Iran Taiwan
■ **—36-50%** Brazil S. Korea Poland Jordan S. Africa Syria
■ **—36% AND LESS** Italy Nigeria India

tested where more people said we did not have a vital interest than said we did. (The others were Nigeria and India.)

Two Middle Eastern countries were high on the list—Saudi Arabia and Israel. The public sees these two antagonists as about equal in importance for the United States, Israel presumably for political reasons, Saudi Arabia for economic reasons, and both for reasons of military security. Egypt, with which our ties are weaker and more recent, ranks a bit lower in importance. Lebanon also was perceived, by a two-to-one margin, as a country where the U.S. has a vital interest, a perception undoubtedly encouraged by the presence of U.S. troops in that country to maintain peace among Israel, the PLO, and Lebanese factions. Jordan and Syria came out significantly lower on the list.

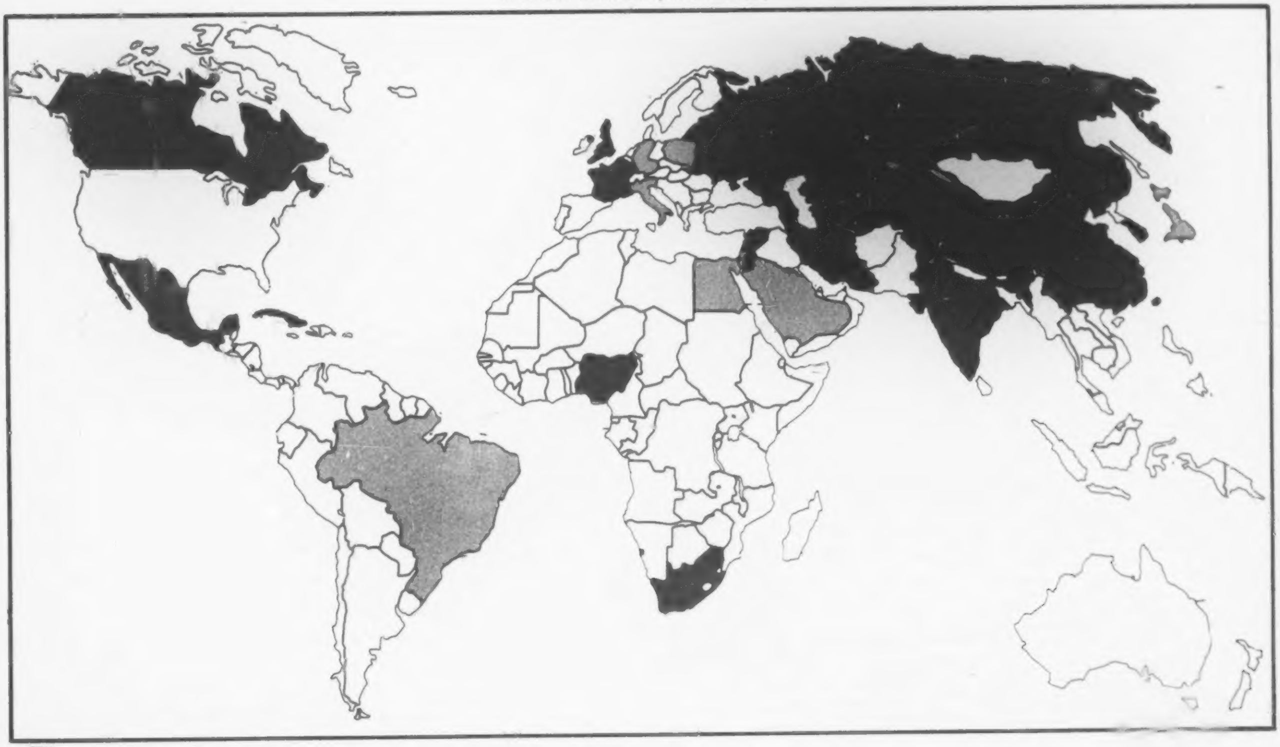
The public continues to see a strong U.S. interest in the People's Republic of China, although it has declined a bit over the past four years. Otherwise, Third World countries ranked fairly low — including India, the second largest country in the world. A bare majority of Americans continue to feel that we have a vital interest in Iran, although that figure has dropped 16 points since the 1978 survey. The Iranian revolution and the hostage crisis, which took place during the intervening period, diminished but did not destroy Americans' sense of interest in Iran. And despite the downgrading of U.S. diplomatic ties with Taiwan, a majority virtually unchanged since 1978 continues to feel that we have a vital interest in that country.

Better-educated and more internationalist-minded Americans are more likely to see vital U.S. interests in almost all other countries. Thus, among respondents who were rated "high" in attentiveness to foreign news, 37% saw the U.S. as having vital interests in at least half of the countries tested. This was true of 24% of those rated "average" in attentiveness to foreign news and only 13% of those rated "low" in foreign news interest. It was not surprising, therefore, that a larger proportion of the leadership sample than of the public sample saw the U.S. as having a vital interest in each country.

The one exception was Taiwan; 51% of the public, but only 44% of opinion leaders, thought the U.S. has a vital interest in that country. This is a case where the "cue" that the U.S. has officially renounced interest in Taiwan in favor of the People's Republic of China has been picked up more readily by the elite than by the mass public. In fact, Taiwan is at the bottom of the list among opinion leaders, along with Poland and Syria, the other two countries where a majority of opinion leaders does not see a vital U.S. interest. The low priority given to Poland is striking, given the Reagan administration's attention to the Polish crisis.

A mood of security-consciousness can be seen in the list of countries where U.S. interest is perceived to have increased over the past four years. They include our border countries—Canada (13% increase since 1978) and Mexico (+14% percent); our principal European and Asian allies—Britain (+14%), West Germany (+7%), Japan (+4%), and France (+4%); another Western Hemisphere country, Brazil (+7%); and a communist country threatened by Soviet intervention, Poland (+15%). On the other hand, the public's

FIGURE III-2
FAVORABILITY (The Public)



■ **—60° AND WARMER** Canada Great Britain France Mexico
▨ **—50-60°** West Germany Israel Italy Brazil Japan Poland Egypt Saudi Arabia
■ **—40-50°** Taiwan India People's Republic of China Jordan Lebanon S. Africa S. Korea Nigeria Syria
■ **—UNDER 30°** Iran Cuba Soviet Union

interest in South Africa has dropped sharply since 1978 (25% fewer now say the U.S. has a vital interest there), along with long-term ally South Korea (−18%), ally-turned-enemy Iran (−16%), Third World countries Nigeria, Egypt, and India (losses of 10, 9, and 7 points, respectively), and the People's Republic of China (−6%). These trends reflect a heightened sense of tension between the U.S. and the Soviet Union since 1978 and a decline of concern about countries peripheral to that conflict.

FAVORABILITY TOWARD COUNTRIES

Respondents in the public sample were asked, as in 1978, to indicate their degree of "favorability" toward each in a list of 24 countries on a thermometer scale, ranging between 0° (very cold, or unfavorable) and 100° (very warm, or favorable). A thermometer rating of 50° was designated as neutral. (See Table III-2 and Figure III-2) As in 1978, Western countries tended to come out high in favorability, with Canada, Britain, and France at the top of the list. It should be noted that the public has quite favorable feelings toward France and Italy (60° and 55°, respectively) even though the previous question showed these two countries rated relatively low in terms of vital U.S. interests. On the other hand, Japan, which was at the top of the list when it came to vital interests, received a relatively lower favorability rating (53°). Apparently, the public is able to distinguish our interests from our affective ties.

Generally, Third World countries fell in the middle, or neutral, range in terms of favorability, with Israel (55°) and two Latin American countries, Mexico (60°) and Brazil (54°), somewhat higher than the others. The one Third World country that elicited a very negative response was, not surprisingly, Iran. Iran's favorability rating fell by no less than 22° in four years, from 50° in 1978 to 28° in 1982. The public does show distinctively different attitudes toward different communist countries. Poland, the East European country most actively resistant to Soviet domination, won a slightly favorable rating, 52°. The People's Republic of China, at 47°, was regarded in only a barely unfavorable light. Both countries improved their favorability ratings, by 2° and 3°, respectively, since 1978. The Soviet Union and its close ally, Cuba, came out at the very bottom of the list, and, in fact, feelings about both countries have grown noticeably more negative since 1978 (a slippage of 5° for Cuba and 8° for the Soviet Union).

Most other countries that were tested in 1978 showed little change in their 1982 ratings. The data do, however, point to an interesting shift of sentiment on the Middle East: public favorability toward Israel slipped by 6°, from 61° in 1978 to 55° in 1982, just after the invasion of Lebanon and the massacres at the PLO refugee camps in that country. Public opinion toward Saudi Arabia, on the other hand,

TABLE III-2. Thermometer ratings for countries—The Public

"Next I'd like you to rate the same countries on this feeling thermometer. If you feel neutral toward a country, give it a temperature of 50 degrees. If you have a warm feeling toward a country, give it a temperature higher than 50 degrees. If you have a cool feeling toward a country, give it a temperature lower than 50 degrees."

	Mean Temperature
Canada	74°
Great Britain	68°
France	60°
Mexico	60°
West Germany	59°
Israel	55°
Italy	55°
Brazil	54°
Japan	53°
Poland	52°
Egypt	52°
Saudi Arabia	52°
Taiwan	49°
India	48°
People's Republic of China	47°
Jordan	47°
Lebanon	46°
South Africa	45°
South Korea	44°
Nigeria	44°
Syria	42°
Iran	28°
Cuba	27°
Soviet Union	26°

TABLE III-3. THERMOMETER RATINGS FOR PERSONALITIES—The Public

"Now I would like you to rate some American and foreign leaders on this thermometer scale. What temperature would you give to:"

	Temperature (0°–100°)	(Percent Familiar)
Pope John Paul II	70°	96%
British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher	61°	91
Canadian Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau	55°	82
Secretary of State George Shultz	55°	72
President Ronald Reagan	54°	99
Former President Jimmy Carter	54°	99
Former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger	54°	95
U.N. Ambassador Jeane Kirkpatrick	54°	66
Senator Edward Kennedy	53°	97
French President François Mitterrand	49°	66
Prime Minister Menachem Begin of Israel	45°	88
Former President Richard Nixon	38°	97
Soviet Premier Leonid Brezhnev	31°	87
PLO leader Yassir Arafat	28°	83
The Ayatollah Khomeini of Iran	11°	91

improved, from a slightly unfavorable 48° in 1978 to a slightly favorable 52° in 1982. Feelings about Egypt were virtually unchanged while Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria were not tested in 1978.

FAVORABILITY TOWARD WORLD LEADERS

The public respondents also were asked to give thermometer ratings of various international figures. (See Table III-3) Pope John Paul II topped the list with a resoundingly favorable 70° rating. Interestingly, the next top-ranked world leader was British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher who, at 61°, bested all of the American public figures tested, including President Reagan. Prime Minister Thatcher's victory in the Falkland Islands may have won her many admirers in the United States as well as in her own country. All of the American public figures save one fell into the moderately favorable range of popularity, 53° to 55°, as did Canadian Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau.

Both President Reagan and former President Carter ended up with exactly the same favorability rating, 54°. In Reagan's case, however, the data reveal considerable polarization: 23% of the public gave the president a very unfavorable rating (0° to 30°) while 27% gave him a very favorable rating (76° to 100°). At 54°, President Reagan's rating was virtually unchanged from 1978 (55°)—which is surprising because he was elected president in the intervening period. When Jimmy Carter was tested in 1978, at the same point in his administration, his rating was a significantly higher 65°. The only American figure to receive an unfavorable rating was former President Richard Nixon — 38°, which was marginally better than the rating of Soviet Premier Leonid Brezhnev (31°), who was still in office during the interviewing period.

The Ayatollah Khomeini of Iran came out at the bottom of the list, at 11°. PLO leader Yassir Arafat finished second lowest (28°), which does not indicate any great surge of sympathy from the American people as a result of events in Lebanon. However, feelings toward Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin did decline substantially. Begin was regarded quite favorably at 57° in 1978; in 1982 his rating had slipped into the unfavorable range, 45°, with one-quarter of the public expressing a strongly unfavorable attitude compared to only 7% strongly favorable. Notably, Menachem Begin's favorability rating, at 45°, was fully 10° lower than the favorability rating for Israel.

While Henry Kissinger's favorability rating fell from 60° in 1978 to 54° in 1982, it is still moderately favorable and, in fact, equal to the ratings of Reagan and Carter, an impressive record for a man who has been out of office for six years. The results of the 1980 election also can be seen in the slippage of the two Democratic contenders in that race. The popularity ratings of both Jimmy Carter and Edward M. Kennedy fell by 11° between 1978 and 1982.

TABLE III-4. Level of threat to U.S. created by communist electoral victories—1982

"I am going to read a list of countries. For each, tell me how much of a threat it would be to the U.S. if the communists came to power."

	Great Threat		Somewhat of a Threat		Not Very Much		No Threat		Don't Know	
	Public	Leaders	Public	Leaders	Public	Leaders	Public	Leaders	Public	Leaders
Mexico	61%	70%	19%	24%	8%	4%	4%	1%	8%	1%
Saudi Arabia	49	61	31	32	8	4	3	2	9	1
France	31	37	38	44	17	15	5	3	9	1
Iran	24	17	35	50	22	20	10	12	9	1
El Salvador	21	10	43	42	21	36	5	11	10	1
Taiwan	17	6	36	25	23	33	11	35	13	1

THREAT OF COMMUNISM

The American public treats the communist threat in different countries with varying degrees of seriousness. One question asked "if the Communist Party came to power through peaceful elections" in each of six countries, would that represent "a great threat," "somewhat of a threat," "not very much of a threat," or "no threat at all" to the United States. (See Table III-4) The six countries tested in 1982 were El Salvador, France, Saudi Arabia, Mexico, Iran, and Taiwan.

A majority of the public does regard a communist takeover, even if by peaceful democratic means, as at least "somewhat of a threat" in every one of these countries. But only in the case of Mexico does a majority (61%) say that a communist victory would be "a great threat to the U.S." The figure drops to 49% in the case of Saudi Arabia and only 31% for France (where there is now communist participation in the government). In each of these three cases the leaders were more likely to see a communist government as "a great threat to U.S. interests" (70% in the case of Mexico, 61% in the case of Saudi Arabia, and 37%—still a relatively low figure—in the case of France). For both the leaders and the public, the percentages holding the view that communist rule in Mexico and France constituted "a great threat" to the U.S. increased between 1978 and 1982 (Saudi Arabia was not tested in 1978). The increases for France were 5% in the mass public sample and 4% in the elite sample. In the case of Mexico, the increases in concern over communism were somewhat greater—8% in the public sample and 19% in the leaders sample.

The public tended to see communist takeovers of Iran, El Salvador, and Taiwan as substantially less serious. The prevailing view was that communist victories in these three countries would represent "somewhat of a threat" to the U.S. In the case of Iran, which was tested in 1978, the view of communism as a great threat declined by 11 points in the mass public and 35 points among the leaders. However, these three countries reversed the pattern reported for Mexico, Saudi Arabia, and France. The public was more likely than the leaders to see communist takeovers in Iran, El Salvador, and Taiwan as threatening to the United States.

Twenty-six percent of the public, but 47% of the leaders, saw "not very much of a threat" or "no threat at all" in a communist victory—"through peaceful elections"—in El Salvador. Thirty-four percent of the public and a substantial 68% of the leaders were similarly unconcerned about a communist takeover of Taiwan. The leaders, it appears, find it easier than the public to differentiate among countries where communist governments would or would not threaten U.S. interests. The leaders' group view is that communism does threaten the U.S. greatly in Mexico and Saudi Arabia; it does so only "somewhat" in France and Iran; and it is not much of a threat in El Salvador and Taiwan, two countries where U.S. administrations portrayed a "great threat" to U.S. interests and have made heavy military commitments.

SUPPORT FOR NATO

Our oldest regional security alliance is, of course, NATO. The data show continuing public support for that military commitment. (See Table III-5) In 1982, as in 1974 and 1978, a majority of the American public favored keeping our commitment to NATO as it is now. In 1978 support for NATO increased slightly over 1974, and in 1982 that higher level of support was essentially maintained. Fifty-eight percent of the public favor keeping the same level and 9% support increasing that commitment—both figures exactly the same as in 1978. Fifteen percent feel that the U.S. should decrease its commitment to NATO, compared with 13% who felt that way four years ago, an insignificant change.

The 1982 survey does show some shift in the sentiments of opinion leaders on the NATO issue, however. The proportion who want to increase our NATO commitment fell from 21% among opinion leaders in 1978 to 7% in 1982. In 1978, 21% of the leaders wanted to increase our NATO commitment and 12% wanted to decrease it. In 1982 the margin had shifted to 12% for a decrease and 7% for an increase. The position that gained support among opinion leaders—no less than 14 points—was to keep our NATO commitment about the same as it is now. The latter view, at 79%, now represents a strong consensus among opinion leaders.

U.S. RELATIONS WITH CUBA

Other evidence of high level of tolerance in public opinion comes in the case of Cuba. Despite declining favorability toward Cuba and the Soviet Union, there is substantial public support for "the U.S. entering into negotiations with Cuba, looking toward reestablishing diplomatic and economic relations and exchanging ambassadors." The public favors such a proposal 48% to 37%, and opinion leaders favor it by a resounding 81% to 18%. Indeed, there is almost no difference between self-described liberals, moderates, and conservatives on this issue. An effort to reestablish diplomatic relations with Cuba is favored 50-37% among liberals, 50-35% among moderates, and 49-42% among conservatives. Such a proposal was supported by 54 of the 63 business leaders interviewed, 27 of the 28 labor leaders, and 28 of the 53 Congressional leaders; 8 of the 11 administration figures interviewed opposed the idea, however (though none of them strongly).

How did respondents feel the U.S. should deal with Cuban subversion in Central America? The prevailing view among both the public and the leaders (roughly 4 in 10 of each group) was that the U.S. should "negotiate with Cuba and try to get an agreement to stop the aid" if the U.S. found clear evidence that Cuba was sending military supplies to rebels in Central America. Such a solution, of course, implies some form of contact between the two countries that does not now exist. The second most popular solution (26% of the public, 39% of the leaders) was to take strong diplomatic action against Cuba. There was very little support in either sample for doing nothing or for taking military action against Cuba, the two extreme alternatives. In the case of Cuba, as with the Soviet Union, the data reveal two basic sentiments: increased distrust since 1978 but, at the same time, a willingness to take positive action to improve relations and decrease the risk of war.

SECRET ACTIVITIES OF THE CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

Nor is the public particularly supportive of CIA subversion. The poll asked, "In general, do you feel the CIA should or should not work secretly inside other countries to try to weaken or overthrow governments unfriendly to the U.S.?" Opinion leaders opposed such activity 58-35% while the public supported it by a narrow margin, 43-37%. Interestingly, respondents who were more attentive to foreign news and more internationalist-minded tended to be divided over the issue of CIA subversion. But those who paid little attention to foreign news were 38% to 31% percent favorable, and those who paid a great deal of attention were 50% to 39% favorable.

The same pattern held true when people were asked whether the CIA should be placed under greater restraint. Twenty-two percent of those low in attentiveness and 27% of those high in attentiveness favored greater restraint. But 10% of those low in attentiveness and 22% of those high in attentiveness favored fewer restrictions on CIA activities. Overall, 43% of the public felt that curbs on CIA activities should remain about the same as they are now; 25% wanted greater restraints, and just 15% wanted fewer. Here, too, the public seems inclined in a different direction than the Reagan administration. These figures are almost unchanged from 1978. At the elite level, the balance of sentiment is about the same and, again, shows little change since 1978. The general feeling is that CIA activities are under about the right level of restraint, with slightly more support for greater rather than fewer restrictions.

SENTIMENTS ON THE MIDDLE EAST

The evidence reported earlier indicated some slippage in public favorability toward Israel and a marked drop in favorability toward Prime Minister Menachem Begin since 1978. There is reason to believe that this shift was related to the public's reaction to the Israeli invasion of Lebanon during the summer of 1982. The survey asked people how they felt about "Israel's recent actions in Lebanon." The public disapproved of these actions 55% to 21% while the leaders' disapproval was even stronger, 68% to 27%.

Other Gallup surveys confirm this negative public assessment of Israeli policies In August 1982 the public endorsed the view, by a strong 64-26% margin, that "the U.S. should require that all weapons sent by the U.S. to Israel should be used only for defensive purposes" instead of "in any way they feel is necessary." The proportion of the American public favoring the creation of "a separate, independent Palestinian nation" grew from 29% in October 1977 to 41% in July 1982. Indeed, the 1982 figures show an almost two-to-one margin (41% to 21%) in support of a Palestinian state. In our November poll the public supported President Reagan's Middle East peace plan by over two-to-one (48% to 22%). Finally, one-third of the public thought that U.S. military aid and arms sales to Israel should be decreased (17%) or stopped altogether (16%), compared to only 9% who thought that such aid should be increased. Among opinion leaders, the ratio was even more negative — 25% for decreasing or stopping military aid to Israel and only 5% for increasing such aid.

TABLE III-5. Attitude toward NATO

"Some people feel that NATO, the military organization of Western Europe and the United States, has outlived its usefulness and that the United States should withdraw militarily from NATO. Others say that NATO has discouraged the Russians from trying a military takeover in Western Europe. Do you feel we should increase our commitment to NATO, keep our commitment what it is now, decrease our commitment but still remain in NATO, or withdraw from NATO entirely?"

	1974		1978		1982	
	Public	**Leaders**	**Public**	**Leaders**	**Public**	**Leaders**
Increase commitment	4%	na	9%	21%	9%	7%
Keep commitment what it is	50	na	58	65	58	79
Decrease commitment	13	na	9	12	11	12
Withdraw entirely	7	na	4	1	4	1
Not sure	26	na	20	1	18	1

Have Americans' sympathies in the Arab-Israeli conflict changed as a result of disapproval of Israeli policies? In the 1982 survey 48% of the public said they sympathized more with Israel, and 17% said they sympathized more with the Arab nations in the Middle East situation — still a strong margin of support for Israel. In 1978 the figures were somewhat smaller on both sides (41% for Israel, 13% for the Arabs). However, the 1978 survey asked the sympathy question only among the 87% of the sample who said they had heard or read about the situation in the Middle East while in 1982 the question was asked of everyone. A close inspection of the 1982 data reveals that as attentiveness to foreign news increases, so does sympathy for *both* Israel and the Arabs: those low in attention favored Israel over the Arabs by 40-14% while those high in attention favored Israel by 54-24%. Thus, a screen for attentiveness very likely would have produced slightly greater sympathy for both sides. It seems reasonable to conclude, therefore, that sympathy for both Israel and the Arabs increased between 1978 and 1982.

The sympathy question was asked in several polls during the intervening time period. These polls enable us to pinpoint the shifts in public sentiment more precisely. They show that sympathy for Israel was about 40% in late 1978 and early 1979. It rose slightly, to 44%, in mid-1981. Several polls taken between January and June 1982 — before the invasion of Lebanon — show an increase in sympathy for

Israel to between 49% and 52%. Sympathy dropped after the invasion to 41% in July 1982 and to an all-time low of 32% in September, just after the massacres in the Sabra and Shatila camps. This sharp decline appears to have been temporary, however. Our November poll shows sympathy for Israel back up to 48%, or about where it was just before the events in Lebanon.

The stronger effect appears to be on sympathy for the Arabs. Gallup polls show sympathy for the Arabs rising from 6-8% in the mid-1970s to 10-14% after President Anwar Sadat's peace mission to Jerusalem in November 1977. Arab support remained in this range through early 1982. Gallup's September 1982 poll, taken in the aftermath of the massacres, reveals a sudden upswing in sympathy for the Arabs, to 28%. By November, however, that sentiment had fallen to 17% —lower than in the immediate aftermath of the events in Beirut but still noticeably higher than had been the case before June 1982.

It appears that sympathy for Israel rose prior to the invasion of Lebanon while sympathy for the Arabs increased after, and probably as a result of, those events. It should be stressed that the balance of public sympathy is still strongly pro-Israel. By almost a three-to-one margin, Americans favor Israel over the Arabs. Prime Minister Menachem Begin's popularity rating, while lower than it was four years ago, is still substantially higher than PLO Chairman Yassir Arafat's. On the other hand, Begin as an individual is much less favorably regarded than Israel as a country. Overall, there is now a greater intensity of feeling on both sides of the Middle East issue.

One might expect opinion leaders' sentiments to have changed quite sharply as a result of the dramatic 1982 events in the Middle East since they are considerably more attentive to such issues. The fact is, however, that the sympathies of opinion leaders hardly changed at all between 1978 and 1982. In 1978 the leadership sample sympathized with Israel over the Arabs by 47% to 21%. In 1982 the margin of sympathy for Israel was slightly greater, 51% to 19%, but not different enough to indicate a significant shift in a sample this small.

A separate question asked respondents whether they sympathized with Israel or "the Palestinians." The 1978 results showed almost exactly the same public response to the Israel-Palestinian choice as to the Israel-Arab choice. In 1982, however, responses to the two questions differed. While the public sympathized with Israel over "the Arabs" by 48% to 17%, they supported Israel over "the Palestinians" by a lesser margin, 40% to 17%. Opinion leaders were even more sensitive to the difference in terminology. Their support for Israel over "the Arabs" (51-19%) dropped to 42-26% for Israel over "the Palestinians." It appears that the net result of the Lebanon episode in terms of American public opinion was to generate a modest increase in sympathy for the Palestinian and Arab causes—but without doing any substantial damage to public support for Israel.

IV. U.S. Economic Involvement

At a time of continuing deep recession in the U.S. economy, most Americans viewed foreign economic policy through lenses of self-interest. At the end of 1982 they were especially concerned about the impact of foreign policy on U.S. unemployment, the budget, and energy supplies. Many felt humanitarian concerns about world poverty, but few were willing to spend much money on economic aid. Most Americans were also very skeptical about military aid or even arms sales. Foreign policy leaders, on the other hand, were much more strongly committed to free trade and economic aid for developing countries, and they were somewhat more favorable toward military aid.

FOCUS ON THE U.S. ECONOMY

As indicated earlier, most Americans saw the domestic economy — and especially unemployment — as the biggest problems facing the country. But this did not mean foreign policy was irrelevant. Quite the contrary; once again, as in our past surveys, most Americans perceived the world as highly interdependent and saw our economy as strongly affected by foreign policy.

When asked about a series of foreign-domestic connections, most Americans (72%) saw foreign policy as having a major impact on the U.S. economy generally and especially on gasoline prices (81%), the value of the dollar abroad (72%), and unemployment at home (66%). In line with changing circumstances since 1978, the assessment of impact on the value of the dollar was down by 10% and impact on unemployment was up sharply by 15%. It is especially notable that the public increasingly sees a strong link between foreign policy and domestic unemployment — a link that, presumably, works through export markets for American goods and foreign competition for the U.S. market. (See Table IV-1)

Quite naturally, therefore, most people define their main foreign policy objectives in terms of these foreign-domestic connections. Indeed, protecting jobs of American workers, keeping up the value of the dollar, and securing adequate supplies of energy were seen as very important goals of foreign policy by even more Americans than cited the other leading goals: containing communism or worldwide arms control. (See Table II-3 in Chapter II)

Concern about energy supplies remained high. Saudi Arabia, presumably because of its abundant oil reserves, was perceived as one of the top four or five countries of vital interest to the U.S., along with Great Britain and West Germany. Many Americans (49%) thought it would be a "great" threat to the U.S. if communists came to power in Saudi Arabia through peaceful elections — many more than felt that way about France (31%) or El Salvador (21%). And despite a strong distaste for military involvement, a substantial 39% of the public favored the use of U.S. troops if "the Arabs cut off all oil shipments to the U.S.," a situation considered next in seriousness, among possibilities listed, to a Soviet invasion of Western Europe or Japan. One-quarter of the public would even send troops in the event of an invasion of Saudi Arabia by Iran.

The public's focus on the U.S. economy was evident also, as discussed below, in support of protectionist measures and in a general unwillingness to spend money on economic or military aid.

This overriding preoccupation with the domestic economic implications of foreign policy was not fully shared, however, by the foreign policy leaders surveyed. To be sure, most of the leaders (53%: less than the public's 64% but up sharply from 25% in 1978) saw unemployment and recession as among the biggest problems facing the country, and they agreed (78%) that foreign policy has a major impact on the economy at home. But they did not make the same connections with specific policies. Considerably fewer leaders than members of the general public saw foreign policy as having a great impact on food prices (38% of leaders versus 60% of the public), unemployment (48% versus 66%), or even the value of the dollar (60% versus 72%) and gasoline prices (61% versus 81%). Labor leaders overwhelmingly (79%) perceived a major impact on unemployment; businessmen did not (41%). The leaders lowered their estimate of impacts on the dollar and

TABLE IV-1. Impact of foreign policy on the U.S. economy

"How important an impact do you think U.S. foreign policy has on the following: a major impact, a minor impact, or no impact at all?"

	1974	1978		1982		Change in % points 1978-1982	
	Public*	Public	Leaders	Public	Leaders	Public	Leaders
Our overall economy at home							
Major impact	76%	72%	83%	72%	78%	0	−5
Gasoline prices at home							
Major impact	87	85	77	81	61	−4	−16
The value of the dollar abroad							
Major impact	78	82	76	72	60	−10	−16
Unemployment at home							
Major impact	60	51	41	66	48	+15	+7
Food prices at home							
Major impact	76	64	39	60	38	−4	−1

*No leaders data for 1974

gasoline prices even more than the public did (by 16%), in line with changing realities since 1978. (See Table IV-1)

Nor did the leaders accord domestic economic factors so much importance in their policy preferences. They differed markedly from the public on the goals of foreign policy, emphasizing arms control (86%) and our allies' security (82%) most highly; they stressed combating world hunger (64%) and improving the living standards of less developed countries (55%) much more than the public did. These greater concerns with worldwide security and economic development reflect the leaders' stronger commitment to internationalism generally.

The foreign policy leaders put considerably less emphasis on the domestically-oriented, self-interested aims of keeping up the value of the dollar (38% —down a striking 35% since 1978) and protecting American jobs (43% — up 9%, however, since 1978). They did agree on the importance of securing energy supplies (72%—down 16% from the crisis atmosphere of 1978). (See Table II-3) The leaders agreed as well on Saudi Arabia being of vital interest to the U.S. (93%) and on the threat of a communist government there (61%), but they were a bit less willing to contemplate use of U.S. troops in the event of an oil cutoff (36%).

As we will see, the leaders followed up on their disagreements with the public over priorities with much more willingness to spend money on aid and much less interest in trade protectionism than was expressed by the public.

Foreign policy leaders, of course, are not all alike. The businessmen in our sample, for example, differed markedly from the labor leaders in terms of foreign policy goals. The labor officials were much more likely than businessmen to cite as very important the altruistic goals of promoting human rights in other countries (68% of labor leaders versus 14% of businessmen); combating world hunger (86% versus 46%); bringing democracy to other countries (39% versus 10%); protecting weaker nations against aggression (64% versus 37%); and helping to improve the standard of living in less developed nations (64% versus 41%). Labor leaders also much more often emphasized the self-interested goal of protecting the jobs of American workers (89% versus 40%). Businessmen, on the other hand, more often cited as very important the goals of matching Soviet military strength (68% versus 43%) and promoting the interests of American business abroad (38% versus 21%).

TARIFFS AND TRADE

Foreign policy leaders expressed very strong support for free trade, long a keystone of internationalist attitudes. Fully 67% (down a bit, to be sure, from the 75% of 1978) favored all countries' eliminating their tariffs and other restrictions on imported goods, with only 28% calling tariffs necessary. (See Table IV-2) In our leadership sample businessmen endorsed eliminating tariffs by an especially large proportion, 81%, whereas labor leaders were the most protectionist, with only 21% opposing tariffs.

Among the general public, sentiment was just the reverse of the leaders': 57% thought tariffs necessary and only 22% favored eliminating them. About the same level of public support for tariffs was found by the Council in 1978 and indeed by other surveys throughout the middle and late 1970s. No doubt, a major reason for the public's advocacy of tariffs was worry about foreign competition and a belief that protectionism could preserve American jobs. Curiously, however, low-income Americans — presumably those most concerned about jobs — were *least* supportive of tariffs, perhaps because of apprehension that tariffs raise the prices of consumer goods.

In any case, there was a very large gap between leaders and public on the question of eliminating tariffs: a gap of 45 percentage points. This is one of many such gaps we have found, and one of the largest.

At the same time, the public did not always favor restrictions on trade for *political* or strategic reasons. Only 15%, for example, supported President Reagan's economic sanctions (subsequently abandoned) on allies who were helping the Soviets build a natural gas pipeline to Western Europe. Similarly, only 28% favored an embargo on grain sales to the Soviet Union; 57% were opposed. Substantially more of the public favored unspecified restrictions on U.S.-Soviet trade, however (47%, up from 39% in 1978), as well as restrictions on the sale of advanced U.S. computers (59%, up from 51%). The foreign policy leaders overwhelmingly opposed a grain embargo (81%) or restricting Soviet trade generally (69%), though they did favor limiting the sale of computers (79%, up sharply from 59% in 1978). On this point the Reagan administration appears to have made some headway with both leaders and public.

TABLE IV-2. Tariffs and trade restrictions

"It has been argued that if all countries would eliminate their tariffs and restrictions on imported goods, the costs of goods would go down for everyone. Others have said that such tariffs and restrictions are necessary to protect certain manufacturing jobs in certain industries from the competition of less expensive imports.... Generally, would you say you sympathize more with those who want to eliminate tariffs or those who think such tariffs are necessary?"

	1978			1982		
	Public	Leaders	Gap (leaders minus public)	Public	Leaders	Gap (leaders minus public)
Eliminate tariffs	22%	75%	+53	22%	67%	+45
Tariffs are necessary	57	23	−34	57	28	−29
Don't know	21	2	−19	21	5	−16

ECONOMIC AID

On questions of economic aid the public is much less supportive than foreign policy leaders. We found large differences in their views, comparable to the gap on tariff policy.

Most Americans (58%) consider it a very important foreign policy goal to combat world hunger, and such humanitarian feelings are evident in many surveys, which show generous public responses to earthquakes, floods, famines, and other disasters abroad. Yet Americans put much less stress on the more far-reaching and difficult goal of improving the standard of living in less developed nations: only 35% considered that a very important goal. Most of the Third World was not seen as a vital interest to the U.S. by majorities of Americans; only 30% considered India vital and 32%, Nigeria, as indicated in Chapter III. The thermometer ratings of these major developing countries did not indicate very high familiarity or regard either. (See Table III-2 and Figures III-1 and III-2)

TABLE IV-3. Economic aid to other nations

	1974	1978			1982		
	Public	Public	Leaders	Gap (leaders minus public)	Public	Leaders	Gap (leaders minus public)
"On the whole, do you favor or oppose our giving economic aid to other nations for purposes of economic development and technical assistance?"							
Percent in favor	52%	46%	90%	+44	50%	94%	+44
"Overall, do you favor or oppose U.S. economic aid to black African nations?"							
Percent in favor	na	44	88	+44	49	93	+44
"Overall, do you favor or oppose U.S. economic aid to Central American nations?"							
Percent in favor	na	na	na	na	45	91	+46
"Do you feel that U.S. economic aid to Central America is likely to lead to U.S. military involvement in that area?"							
Percent "yes"	na	na	na	na	57	17	−40
"Do you feel economic aid to other countries generally:"							
Positive statements (percent agreeing):							
Helps the economy of other countries	77	78	87	+9	76	88	+12
Helps the national security of other countries	65	72	81	+9	68	83	+15
Helps our national security	44	45	71	+26	44	78	+34
Helps prevent the spread of communism	36	36	51	+15	36	58	+22
Helps our economy at home	25	34	62	+28	30	69	+39
Is worth the economic cost to us	na	na	na	na	30	84	+54
Negative statements (percent agreeing):							
Gets us too involved in other countries' affairs	73	75	34	−41	75	27	−48
Aggravates relations with other countries	52	64	42	−22	na	na	na
Benefits the rich more than the poor in other countries	na	na	na	na	67	53	−14

This ambivalence is all the more clear when it comes to spending money. A bare majority of Americans (50%) favored, in general terms, aid for economic development and technical assistance; but in the context of a diverse list of government programs, a majority (54%) wanted to *cut back* the already small spending on economic aid, with only 8% wanting an increase. (See Table IV-3) Indeed, a fair number of people (16%) spontaneously mentioned the need to reduce foreign aid as one of the "biggest foreign policy problems" facing the U.S.

Advocates of aid among the public were concentrated in the most traditionally internationalist groups: the college educated (72% favoring it); those attentive to foreign news and those who had traveled abroad.

Some of the reluctance to give aid, as we have indicated, can be traced to the weak state of the U.S. economy. At a time when nearly 11% of Americans were jobless, it seemed natural to many people to worry about problems at home first. And only 30% of the public believed foreign aid helps our economy. Much of the opposition came from those with low income and those holding less lucrative jobs.

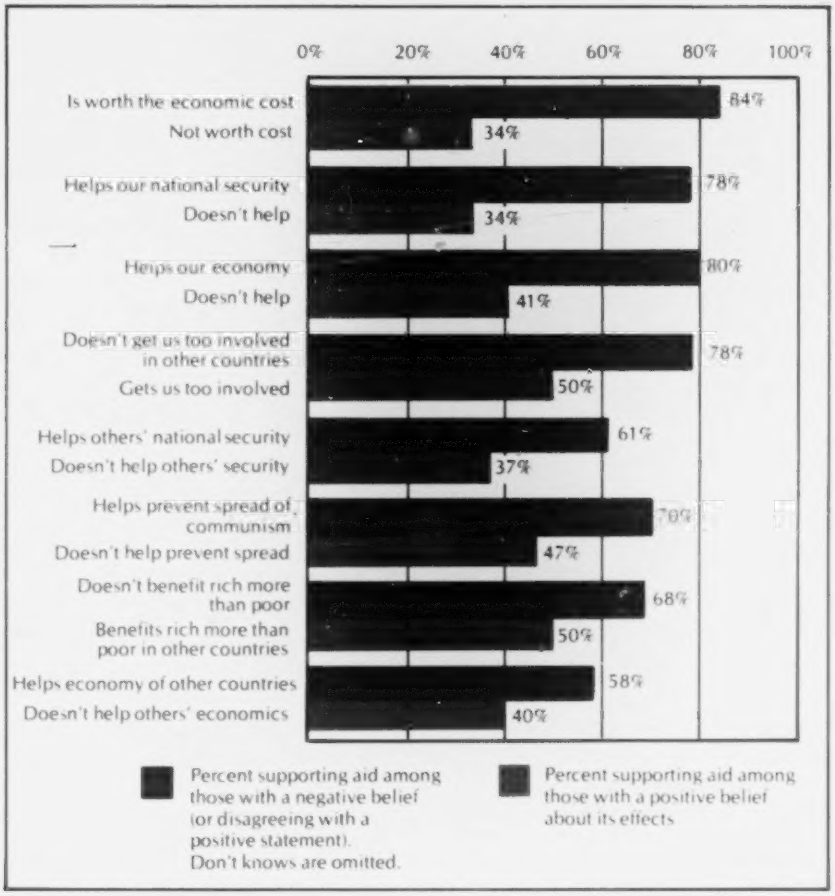
But insofar as opposition to aid reflects motives of economic self-interest, it must be acknowledged that those motives pervade most groups of society. And they do not result simply from a temporary state of recession; resistance to aid (except in wartime) has persisted practically throughout the decades in which polls have been taken. Moreover, some of the resistance to aid also reflects a pervasive skepticism about what it actually can accomplish abroad, as revealed in the answers to our series of questions about the effects of aid. (See Table IV-3)

Most Americans, for example, were willing to grant that aid helps the economies (76%) and the national security (68%) of other countries, but many fewer believed it helps our own national security (44%) or helps prevent the spread of communism (36%). Most Americans (67%) suspected that our aid benefited the rich more than the poor in other countries, and an overwhelming 75% believed it gets us too involved in other countries' affairs. All in all, less than one-third of the American public believed that such aid was worth the economic cost to us.

Of course, mere expression of such beliefs does not demonstrate that they actually affected people's attitudes about aid; nor does it enable us to tell which beliefs were more important. For such purposes it can be helpful to look at Figure IV-1, which shows the level of support for aid among those holding different beliefs. The stronger a relationship (i.e., the bigger the difference in height between adjacent blue and black bars), the more important that factor is likely to be in affecting attitudes toward aid.

By this measure, the most important determinants of attitudes about economic aid were beliefs about effects on U.S. national security and the U.S. economy. Of those thinking aid helps U.S. security, 78% favored aid, but of those thinking it doesn't help, only 34% supported it. Concern about excessive U.S. involvement and beliefs about the effects of aid on the national security of others also affected attitudes toward aid. But altruistic matters, such as helping other countries' economies or not benefiting the rich more than

FIGURE IV-1 Relationships between support for economic aid and beliefs about its effects— 1982 (The Public)



the poor, made little difference to most Americans. (See Figure IV-1)

In other words, the American public tends to evaluate foreign aid from the point of view of U.S. self-interest. And to most Americans, the link to our self-interest, either economically or militarily, is not clear or convincing. Leaders, on the other hand, are more likely to perceive such linkages—and therefore to support foreign aid.

A further hint about fears of excessive involvement is that a substantial plurality of Americans favored economic aid to black African nations (49% to 32%, up from 44-36% in 1978), a question that may evoke humanitarian concerns. But aid to Central America, though closer to home, was supported only by a bare plurality (45% to 38%). Aid to Central America was considered by many (57% to 25%) as likely to lead to military involvement, and most (57%) of those who foresaw involvement opposed such aid, whereas a large majority (71%) of those who did not see military involvement as likely favored aid to Central America. We did not ask a military involvement question about Africa in 1982, but we did in 1978, when prospects of such involvement seemed fairly high. At that time, there was a strong relationship between fear of military involvement in Africa and opposition to aid.

The foreign policy leaders took a very different view of economic aid. On Central America they strongly (76% to 17%) rejected the likelihood of aid leading to military involvement and overwhelmingly (91%) favored economic aid to that area. (See Table IV-3) More generally, a majority (55%) of leaders endorsed as very important (55%) the goal of helping the standard of living of less developed nations. They were much more likely than the public to see a vital U.S. interest in Egypt (90%) as well as in India (57%) and Nigeria (53%).

Nearly all the leaders (94% versus only 50% of the public) favored economic aid in general, and similarly lopsided majorities favored aid to black Africa (93%) and Central America. Of course, leaders tend to have high incomes and to be somewhat insulated from recession, so part of their greater enthusiasm for aid may simply reflect less worry about the domestic economy. But the leaders were also much more likely to see economic aid as helping our economy at home (69% to 30%). In addition, the leaders much more often thought aid helps our own national security (78% to the public's 44%) and helps prevent the spread of communism (58% to 36%). Much less frequently (27% to 75%) did they think it gets us too involved abroad; of course, nearly all leaders favor active involvement abroad anyway. Overall, a large majority of leaders (84% versus the public's 30%) thought aid was worth the cost to us, reflecting a quite different set of beliefs about the world and a much stronger commitment to internationalism.

There exists, then, a major gap between the views of the elite groups we surveyed and the general public on the topic of foreign aid. As Table IV-3 indicates, the gap in policy preferences was some 44 to 46 percentage points in 1982 and about the same four years earlier. Other evidence indicates that this gap has persisted, on these and other issues, for many years.

MILITARY AID

A similar, though narrower, gap exists on questions of military aid. Here the general public is even more negative: fully 63% opposed military aid in general and only 28% supported it. Sixty-three percent wanted to cut back spending on military aid; only 5% wanted to expand it. Again, the poor state of the U.S. economy was one reason; few (39%) thought military aid abroad helps our economy at home. Clearly, however, the reasons go beyond economics because most of the public (53% to 39%) also opposed *selling* military equipment, which would bring in money. (See Table IV-4)

The main reasons for opposition to military aid seem to be simply that few members of the general public believe that it helps our national security (37% to 48%) or that it helps prevent the spread of communism (35%). Instead, they think military aid gets us too involved in other countries' affairs (78%) and aggravates relations with other countries (73%). A large majority of Americans (65% to 14%) believes that it lets dictatorships use their military power against their own people.

Cross-tabulations similar to those we did for economic aid indicate that concerns about U.S. national security and excessive involvement abroad are especially closely related to dislike of military aid. Concern about impact on the U.S. economy and the substitutability of aid for U.S. troops come next while beliefs about effects on other countries' economies and even other countries' national security show the weakest relationships with attitudes toward aid. That is to say, on military aid as well as economic aid, most Americans are preoccupied with matters of U.S. self-interest. In the case of military aid, these matters of self-interest tend to be less economic and more closely involve political relations and national security.

The strong aversion to use of U.S. troops abroad, together with the public's fear that even economic aid could lead to such use in Central America, fits in with fear of excessive involvement as a reason for opposition to aid. Still another factor is suggested by the public's disapproval of Israeli actions in Lebanon and the sentiment, endorsed by 64% in another recent survey, that U.S. weapons sent to Israel should be used for defensive purposes only. Considerably more members of the public (33%) wanted to decrease or stop military aid and arms sales to Israel than wanted to increase them (9%). Israel, of course, has been the leading recipient of U.S. military aid.

The leaders were less concerned than the public about possible negative effects of aid, except for dictators' use of military power (68%). They tended more often to see military aid as helping our economy at home (69% versus the public's 39%), helping our own national security (65% versus 37%), and helping prevent the spread of communism (54% versus 35%). (The leaders were actually *less* likely than the public, however, to see military aid as helping the economies of other countries.) The leaders focused on U.S. security interests: those who believed military aid helps our national security were especially likely (84%) to support aid. Beliefs about excessive U.S. involvement and about preventing the spread of communism and helping the security of others were also strongly related to attitudes toward aid; beliefs about effects on the economies of other countries and on the U.S. economy were weakly related.

Yet the leaders did not issue a resounding endorsement of military aid either. A substantial but not overpowering majority of 59% to 31% favored it in general. The leaders, like the public, more often favored decreasing or stopping (25%) military aid and arms sales to Israel than favored increasing them (5%). Only on the question of *selling* military equipment did more than two-thirds (68%) of leaders express a favorable opinion.

As Table IV-4 indicates, there was a substantial gap between the policy preferences of leaders and public concerning military aid. But that gap was on the order of 30 percentage points, considerably smaller than the 45 or so percentage point gaps in Table IV-3.

STABILITY OF OPINIONS

Finally, it is worth noting that on most matters of economic involvement, opinions of both the public and leaders stayed very nearly the same between 1978 and 1982. We have mentioned some exceptions: decreased perceptions of foreign policy impact on gasoline prices and the value of the dollar but increased perceptions of impact on unemployment at home, for example. Much the same is true of other topics covered in the survey, whether political or military. In most cases opinions have remained fairly constant. Most changes are related to changed world circumstances.

TABLE IV-4. Military aid and arms sales

	1974	1978			1982		
	Public	**Public**	**Leaders**	**Gap (leaders minus public)**	**Public**	**Leaders**	**Gap (leaders minus public)**
"On the whole, do you favor or oppose our giving military aid to other nations? By military aid I mean arms and equipment but not troops."							
Percent in favor	22%	29%	60%	+31	28%	59%	+31
"On the whole, do you favor or oppose our government selling *military equipment to other nations?"*							
Percent in favor	*3533*		67	+34	39	68	+29
"Do you think that giving military aid generally:"							
Positive statements (percent agreeing):							
Helps the national security of other countries	69	72	87	+15	71	76	+5
Helps the economy of other countries	60	59	40	−19	55	31	−24
Is a good substitute for the use of American troops and manpower	44	49	70	+21	51	68	+17
Helps our economy at home	31	43	75	+32	39	69	+30
Helps our own national security	36	35	66	+31	37	65	+28
Helps prevent the spread of communism	36	34	53	+19	35	54	+19
Strengthens our political friends abroad	43	46	72	+26	na	na	na
Negative statements (percent agreeing):							
Gets us too involved in other countries' affairs	78	79	55	−24	78	53	−25
Lets dictatorships use their military power against their own people	59	61	73	+12	65	68	+3
Aggravates relations with other countries	67	73	65	−8	na	na	na

V. U.S. Military Involvement

ATTITUDES ON DEFENSE SPENDING SHIFT

One of the most significant shifts between the 1978 and 1982 public opinion surveys has been in attitudes toward defense spending. This chapter in the previous report described how there had been a change in public opinion in the direction of greater defense efforts between 1974 and 1978. Defense spending was the only major program surveyed to move from a net unfavorable rating in 1974 to a net favorable rating at the time of the second survey. From 1974 to 1978, a 20% shift took place in favor of increased defense spending, from 14% to 34%. During that same period, sentiment for cutting back defense spending declined from 42% to 24%.

The period between 1978 and 1982 has witnessed a drop in public support of defense spending at the same time that the Reagan administration has been expanding budget allocations for the military. This shift undoubtedly reflects satisfaction with administration policy on the part of some former advocates of greater defense spending. It is reasonable to infer as well that there has been a waning of sentiment for more defense spending in the face of much greater domestic unemployment, and significantly growing budget deficits.

In 1982 as well as in 1974 and 1978 attitudes toward defense spending were measured in two ways. First, respondents were asked whether present federal government programs should be "expanded, cut back, or kept about the same." In this context, defense spending was being compared with other domestic programs, including such popular ones as aid to education. When asked in this context, 24% of the public favored expanding defense spending and 34% were for cutting back. This is a literal reversal of the percentages in 1978, when 34% wanted expansion and 24% reduction. Virtually the same proportions were in favor of keeping defense spending at the same levels — 34% in 1978 and 36% in 1982.

When this question was asked later in the survey, with no implied trade-offs with specific other government programs—the results were different: 24% favored cutting back, 52% wanted to maintain the same level, and 21% favored expansion. This again represents a shift since 1978 away from support for greater defense spending; the respective percentages for the question in that year were 16%, 45%, and 32%. As in the past, there was a much greater willingness to reduce defense when choices were posed in terms of competing spending programs.

By either measure, there has been a decrease of approximately the same magnitude in support of more defense spending during the period 1978 to 1982, just as there were comparable increases in support of defense spending expansion between 1974 and 1978. Opinion leaders also reflected the decline of enthusiasm for defense spending. In 1978, 31% wanted to expand that part of the budget and 28% wanted to cut back; by 1982, these percentages had changed to 20% and 41%.

In 1982 for the first time, those who wanted to increase defense spending were asked how to finance this shift. Of the 21% in the popular sample who wanted to expand, only 6% favored paying more taxes while 13% wanted to cut other government programs. Among the 20% of leaders who wanted an increase, however, 9% were willing to pay more taxes and only 8% were disposed to cut other programs (3% "don't know").

Table V-1 puts the findings of the 1974, 1978, and 1982 Council surveys in the broader context of Gallup Poll results on defense spending alone, without reference to other federal programs, going back to 1960. The conclusion suggested by this Table is that support in net terms for greater defense spending peaked in 1960, even more dramatically in 1978, and that 1982 data indicate a reversal in the upward trend that characterized the 1970s. With the recent comparative decline in net support of defense, note that the same percentage favors expansion this time as in 1960 (21%), and a majority feels current spending should be kept the same, though there is stronger sentiment among the public to cut back than was the case in that year (24% now versus 18% then).

Attentiveness to news and belief that the Soviets are militarily superior do not correlate with attitudes toward defense spending. In 1978, 19% of the low attentiveness group wanted to expand defense spending while 52% of the high attentiveness category was for expansion. At that time, the inference was drawn that this reflected a strong feeling on the part of high attentives that the U.S. was falling behind the Soviet Union. In 1982, in contrast, there was much less difference in sentiment when level of attentiveness was controlled. A total of 23% of those highly attentive to foreign news wanted to expand defense spending compared to 19% of those who scored low on the attentiveness scale. There was even less difference among those who were high and low in attentiveness to domestic news.

Previously, there was a strong correlation between support for defense spending and concern about the Soviet Union as a military threat to the United States. This appears to have become less significant in

TABLE V-1. Sentiments on defense spending—The Public — 1982.

1982, 1978, and 1974 Chicago Council on Foreign Relations results compared to Gallup Poll trend. Gallup did not collect data for the period 1960-1968. The CCFR questions were slightly different: 1) Cut back; 2) Keep same; 3) Expand.

	1960	1969	1971	Feb. 1973	Sept. 1973	1974	CCFR 1974	1976	1977	CCFR 1978	CCFR 1982
1. Too much	18%	52%	49%	42%	46%	44%	32%	36%	23%	16%	24%
2. About right	45	31	31	40	30	32	47	32	40	45	52
3. Too little	21	8	11	8	13	12	13	22	27	32	21

TABLE V-2. Sentiments on defense spending by view of Soviet power—The Public—1982

Defense:	Stronger military power: United States	Soviet Union
Expand	20%	37%
Keep same	54	48
Cut back	26	15

1982. In 1978, 69% of those favoring expansion of defense felt the U.S. was falling behind the Soviets; this time, 56% of them felt the Soviets are militarily stronger. The data in Table V-2 reveal that almost half of those who view the Soviets as ahead want to keep our defense at current levels.

As this implies, decline in net advocacy of defense spending has been paralleled by a change in the perception of the military balance between the superpowers. Between the last survey and this one, there has been a decline of 12 points in the percentage of the public believing the United States is stronger militarily than the Soviet Union (from 33% to 21%) but a decline as well of 3 points in the category believing the Soviet Union is stronger (32% to 29%). There has been a great expansion—from 26% in 1978 to 42% in 1982—in the proportion of the public that believes the two superpowers are "about equal." Among leaders, 62% agree that the two states are roughly equal in military power, with 20% believing the United States is stronger and only 15% that the Soviets are stronger. The sentiment among the elite that the U.S. is at least equal to the other side should be kept in mind in analysis of a wide range of foreign policy responses, not just those dealing explicitly with American defense policy.

Another interesting feature of the survey is the willingness of advocates of increased defense spending to pursue cooperative ventures with the Soviet Union. This includes arms control agreements as well as civilian endeavors. Table V-3 highlights this, developing a point already made in Chapter II.

Party identification plays a significant role in views on defense, perhaps reflecting the clearcut views of President Reagan on this subject. A total of 32% of Republicans but only 17% of Democrats were for expanding defense spending; 14% of Republicans and 26% of Democrats wanted to cut back. This is a reversal of the party sentiments on defense as measured by Gallup during the Eisenhower administration, another period when a Republican president held strong views on military spending and helped to fuel important debate on the subject. Figures V-1 and V-2 indicate this significant long-term shift.

Finally, both education and political views have a bearing on attitudes about defense spending. The more formal education a respondent had, the more likely that person was to oppose expansion and favor reduction of defense spending. As party sentiments imply, conservatives are much more in favor of defense spending than liberals. Tables V-4 and V-5 provide details on both of these indices. These Tables are based on the defense question posed in the context of other government programs. Among the elite, religious leaders were particularly opposed to defense spending: only 12% wanted to expand while 52% wanted to cut back. This opposition was surpassed only by that of labor leaders, only 4% of whom wanted to expand, with 54% for cutting back. By contrast, 35% of business leaders wanted to expand and only 16% were for cutting back. Among members of Congress, 30% were for expansion and 40% for reduction.

INTERVENTION

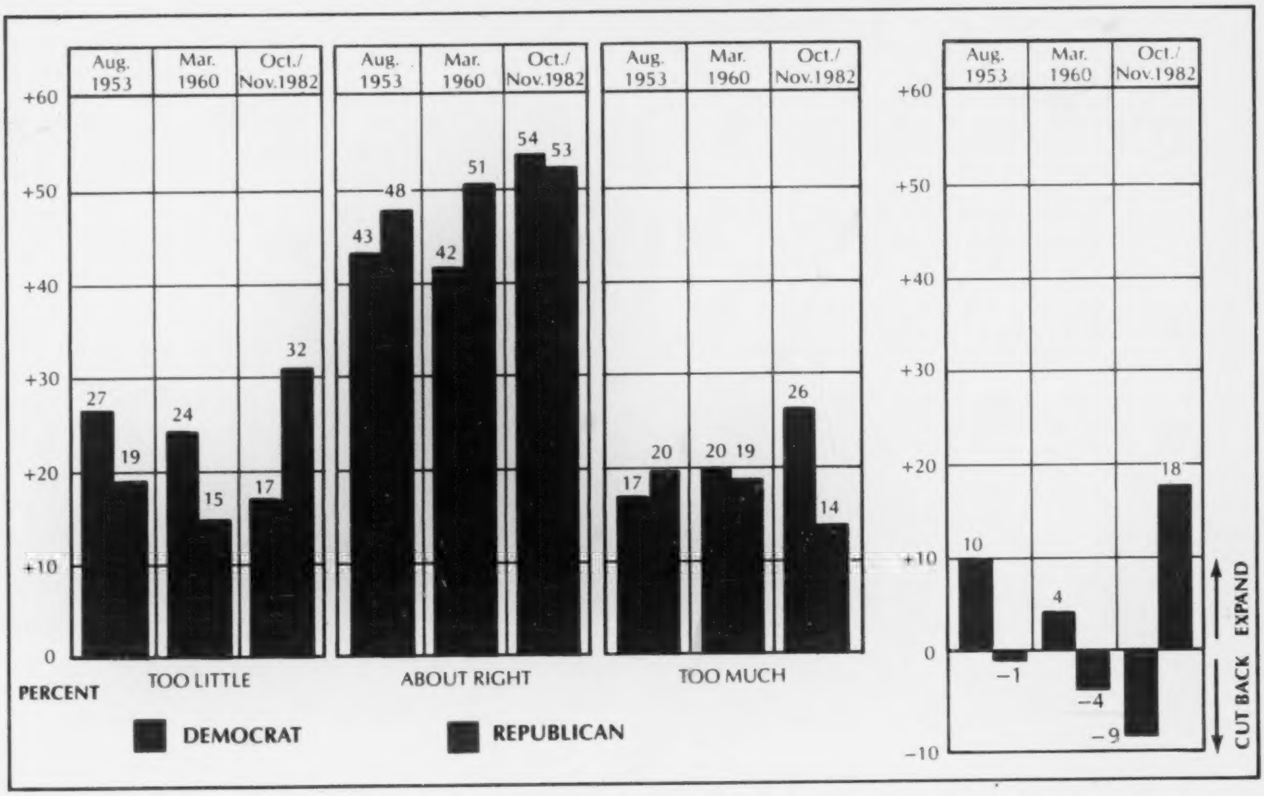
Americans now are more willing to use troops overseas in some circumstances, reflecting a waning of the influence of the Vietnam experience on our thinking about employing force. A majority, however, is willing to use military means in only a few cases. In 1978 the public and leaders were both asked about a range of circumstances in which they would favor or oppose using troops. One clear conclusion to be drawn from the data presented in Table V-6 is that Americans are generally more willing in most cases to use troops now as compared with four years ago. Public and leaders are particularly willing to use troops to protect Western Europe and Japan from Soviet invasion. One difference between the leaders, who are generally more willing to use troops in these circumstances, and the general public concerns Saudi Arabia. If Iran invaded Saudi Arabia, 54% of U.S. leaders would be willing to use troops but only 25% of the public sample felt this way. The trend toward greater willingness to use military force follows a fairly steady line since the 1974 survey.

A greater willingness to use troops has not led to a change in responses about the value and rightness of American efforts in Vietnam. In both 1978 and 1982 people were asked to react to the statement that "the Vietnam war was more than a mistake; it was fundamentally wrong and immoral." In 1978, 72% of the public sample concurred, and this figure did not change in 1982. Among opinion leaders, 45% agreed in 1982, down only a small amount from 50% in this category in the earlier poll. Views on Vietnam do affect willingness to use troops overseas, as Table V-7 reveals.

TABLE V-3. Defense spending and U.S./Soviet cooperation

	Defense Spending					
Policies toward Soviets	Expand		Keep same		Cut back	
	Public	Leaders	Public	Leaders	Public	Leaders
1. Favor negotiating arms control	78%	91%	87%	98%	88%	97%
2. Favor joint solutions to energy problems	70	64	72	80	82	88
3. Favor trade restrictions	56	36	59	29	41	24
4. Favor scientific exchanges	40	26	45	25	32	8
5. Oppose a grain embargo	58	79	67	88	76	82

FIGURES V-1, 2
SUPPORT FOR DEFENSE BY PARTY AFFILIATION: EISENHOWER AND REAGAN YEARS



In 1953 and 1960, there was a category "No opinion" in th questionnaires. Specific questions:

1953: "Do you think too much of the taxes you pay is being spent for defense—or is too little being spent for defense?"

1960: "There is much discussion as to the amount this country should spend for national defense. How do you feel about this—do you think we are spending too little, too much, or about the right amount?"

1982: "Do you think that we should expand our spending on national defense, keep it about the same, or cut back?"

Index: Percent for more defense spending MINUS percent who want to cut back.

U.S. AND EUROPE

The past four years have witnessed growing economic frictions between the U.S. and its European allies. In the 1982 survey the general public was asked how the U.S. should respond to the Soviet-European natural gas pipeline deal, and opinion leaders were asked about the planned deployment of new cruise and Pershing II missiles in Western Europe in 1983. On the public side, the most popular response (37%) was that we should "let our allies pursue policies they think best." A total of 27% were for putting diplomatic pressure on the Europeans, and only 15% favored economic sanctions if other methods did not work. On the missiles question, fully 67% of the elite agreed that deployment of

TABLE V-4. Education and attitudes toward defense spending—1982

	Education:				
Spending:	**Grades 1-8**	**Grades 9-11**	**High School Graduate**	**Some College**	**College Graduate**
Expand	29%	29%	28%	26%	15%
Keep same	43	40	39	39	31
Cut back	28	31	33	35	54

TABLE V-5. Political spectrum and attitudes toward defense spending—1982

	Attitudes:		
Spending:	**Conservative**	**Middle Road**	**Liberal**
Expand	32%	24%	19%
Keep same	39	42	30
Cut back	29	34	51

TABLE V-6. U.S. response to crisis situations—1982

"There has been some discussion about the circumstances that might justify using U.S. troops in other parts of the world. I'd like to ask your opinion about several situations. Would you favor or oppose the use of U.S. troops if:"

Asked of opponents of sending troops on the asterisked items:

"I am going to read the circumstances under which you said you would oppose sending U.S. troops. On this card are levels of U.S. involvement that might be appropriate under these circumstances. For each situation, tell me how far you feel the U.S. should be willing to go."

		Opposed to sending troops		Do nothing		Try to negotiate		Refuse to trade		Send military supplies		Send troops		Don't know	
Situations:		Public	Leaders	Public	Leaders	Public	Leaders	Public	Leaders	Public	Leaders	Public	Leaders	Public	Leaders
Soviets invade Japan	1978	58%	19%	13%	1%	20%	6%	3%	1%	9%	9%	42%	81%	13%	2%
	1982	49	22									51	78		
Arabs cut off oil to U.S.*	1978	64	71	5	1	34	37	12	27	1	1	36	29	12	5
	1982	61	64	4	—	33	47	15	26	2	4	39	36	10	1
N. Korea invades S. Korea	1978	79	55	24	6	28	13	3	2	9	30	21	45	15	4
	1982	78	50									22	50		
Leftist guerrillas about to defeat government of El Salvador*	1982	80	90	18	15	29	43	7	7	11	36	20	10	15	2
Iran invades Saudi Arabia	1982	75	46									25	54		
Arabs invade Israel	1978	78	69	14	2	38	27	3	1	8	35	22	31	15	4
	1982	70	53									30	47		
China invades Taiwan	1978	80	82	25	12	27	44	5	5	7	17	20	18	16	4
	1982	82	85									18	15		
Soviets invade Poland*	1982	69	94	10	10	27	40	13	49	9	11	31	6	13	3
Soviets invade West Europe*	1978	46	8	9	—	16	3	2	—	6	4	54	92	13	1
	1982	35	8	5	—	14	5	4	2	4	4	65	92	9	1
Soviets invade China	1982	79	94									21	6		

TABLE V-7. Willingness to use troops and Vietnam War attitudes —1982

	The Vietnam War "...fundamentally wrong and immoral."			
	Agree strongly		Disagree strongly	
Use troops if:	Public	Leaders	Public	Leaders
Soviets invade Japan	46%	66%	68%	81%
Arabs cut off oil	36	27	52	48
North Korea invades South Korea	16	25	58	68
Rebels winning in El Salvador	16	1	38	23
Soviets invade West Europe	58	86	85	96

the missiles should begin but "...stop if the Soviets agree to limit their own missiles in Europe." Only 19% picked another response to "go ahead deploying the missiles in Europe," and 10% selected the course of not basing the missiles at all. On neither issue was there sentiment for an uncompromising course. Concerning the pipeline, the public apparently does not agree with the initial Reagan administration policy.

NUCLEAR FREEZE

The subject of a nuclear freeze between the United States and the Soviet Union and the related question of unilateral or mutually agreed nuclear arms control have become increasingly visible in political debate in both the United States and Europe. Obviously, the issues involved bear directly on NATO as well as on superpower relations. In the 1982 survey, a specific question was asked to elicit sentiments on this matter. The public and opinion leaders were queried about attitudes toward nuclear weapons and the freeze. The latter was described as "...a mutual, verifiable freeze on nuclear weapons, that is, a freeze agreed to by both sides, with inspections. Would you favor such a freeze?"

On nuclear weapons, there was substantial support for a mutual freeze. A total of 19% of the public agreed that "the U.S. should stop building nuclear weapons even it the Soviet Union does not," compared with only 11% of opinion leaders who felt that way. On the other hand, a significant 26% of the public agreed that "the U.S. should continue to build nuclear weapons regardless of what the Soviets do." Only 6% of the opinion leaders concurred with that approach. Finally, 49% of the public and 79% of the leaders selected the third option, that "the U.S. should stop building nuclear weapons only if the Soviet Union agrees to do so."

Totals of 58% of the public and 79% of the opinion leaders said they were for a freeze "right now, if the Soviets would agree"; 21% of the public and 14% of the leaders were for a freeze "only after the U.S. builds up its nuclear weapons more"; 12% of the public and 5% of the leaders were "not at all" in favor of the freeze approach. Among occupational groups within the opinion leader constituency, religious professionals, not surprisingly, were notable for their support of both the freeze and nuclear disarmament. A total of 26% of religious leaders would stop building nuclear weapons even if the Soviets did not, compared with 14% of media representatives (the next most supportive group), 6% of members of Congress, and 5% of business leaders. Only labor professionals, at 93%, surpassed religious professionals, at 90%, in concurring that they would favor a nuclear freeze immediately, with Soviet agreement. These percentages compare with 46% of members of the administration, 68% of members of Congress, 70% of business leaders, and 82% of educators who felt that way.

ROLE OF THE MILITARY

The Council report of 1979 indicated some marginal increase in the desired influence of the military. The most recent survey indicates that the military is still perceived as important, but fewer people want that particular institution to become more important in the future. This may reflect the significant domestic political debate over budgetary priorities, Congressional pressure for defense cuts, and generally strong pressure from the Reagan administration for greatly expanded defense spending.

In both 1978 and 1982, 40% of the public answered that the military plays a very important role in foreign policy. Among leaders, those answering that way increased from 29% to 36% while those saying the military role was hardly important decreased from 16% to 11%.

There have been changes regarding the role the military *should* play. One significant shift between 1974 and 1978 was among members of the public who believed the military should play a greater role in foreign policy; this category increased from 19% to 29%. In 1978, 23% of the public felt a less important role should be played. In 1982 the figures were 26% for both a more and a less important military, representing a shift of 6% away from a "pro-military" position. Among leaders, only 3% wanted a more important military, compared with 10% who gave that response in 1978, and 48% wanted a less important military, compared with 39% before.

VI. Who Shapes U.S. Foreign Policy?

There is no more important question in a representative democracy than how political leaders are held accountable for their actions and how the governed influence the governors. This relates to the questions of who is perceived to make decisions, who has the right to do so, and whom one can trust to convey information. It also relates to similarities or differences between actual policy and the preferences of foreign policy leaders and ordinary citizens.

The low level of public confidence in political leaders and political institutions continues—as does the public preference for strengthening the role of populist institutions (Congress, the media, and public opinion itself) in the decision-making process. Moreover, our data indicate that a number of Reagan administration policies are not in harmony with the wishes of the general public or foreign policy leaders.

WHO ARE THE PRINCIPAL ACTORS IN DETERMINING U.S. FOREIGN POLICY?

Once again, the president is perceived to be the dominant actor in shaping U.S. foreign policy, with 70% of the public perceiving his role as "very important," about the same level as in 1978. Among leaders, his role is considered even more important, with 91% according him "a very important role," up slightly from four years ago.

In the view of both the public and the leaders, however, the secretary of state's role has increased, very slightly on the public scale (64% calling it very important, compared to 61% in 1978) and substantially among the leaders, with an increase of 20% (from 63% to 83%). This shift no doubt reflects the strong roles that Secretary Alexander Haig and George Shultz have played in the current foreign policy process over the past two years, compared to the more passive role of their predecessors. It may also reflect the more passive role that President Reagan is perceived to play in the day-to-day making of American foreign policy. (See Table VI-1)

On the elite side, a substantial shift occurred in relation to the role of Congress, with the proportion of leaders considering Congress' role as "very important" dropping from 45% to 34% and the proportion considering it "hardly important" increasing by 4%. On the question of the *preferred* Congressional role, many leaders (34%) believe Congress should play a more important role, with considerably fewer (15%) believing it should be less important. The pro-Congress sentiment rose somewhat between 1978 and 1982. This reversed the trend from 1974 to 1978, when enthusiasm of both public and leaders for a stronger congressional role decreased. (See Table VI-2)

When the question was rephrased to focus specifically on the role of Congress in relationship to the president, a similar trend emerged. The percentage of the public believing Congress played "too strong" a role increased 6% from 1974 to 1978 and dropped slightly from 1978 to 1982. Similarly, those who thought Congress' role was too weak dropped 9 points between 1974 and 1978, but during the last four years it increased slightly. On the leadership side, the trend was even stronger. The proportion who felt the role of Congress was too strong dropped 12 percentage points (from 30% to 18%), and those who felt Congress' role was too weak increased by 7%, from 25% to 32%.

Although the sentiment for a stronger role for Congress in relation to the president is less prevalent than it was in 1974, just after the Watergate crisis and the departure of President Nixon, it still has risen significantly over a four-year period. Taken together with the slight drops in the number of those favoring an increased presidential role, both on the popular and leadership side, it would seem to indicate that the general performance of the last two presidents in office, Jimmy Carter and Ronald Reagan, has not inspired overwhelming confidence. Hence the shift toward a preference for a

TABLE VI-1. Role of different institutions in making foreign policy—1982

"How important a role do you think the following currently play in determining the foreign policy of the United States—a very important role, a somewhat important role, or hardly an important role at all?"

	Percent "Very Important"			
	Public 1974	Public 1978	Public 1982	Leaders 1982
The President	49%	72%	70%	91%
Secretary of State	73	61	64	83
State Department	38	45	47	38
Congress	39	45	46	34
American business	41	41	35	32
The Military	36	40	40	36
United Nations	28	31	29	2
The CIA	28	29	28	20
Public Opinion	19	26	23	15
Labor Unions	24	25	17	3
Private Foreign Policy Organizations	na	12	9	3
National Security Advisor	na	na	35	46

TABLE VI-2. ***Preferred*** **role of institutions in making foreign policy**

"Do you feel the roles of the following should be more important than they are now, should be less important than they are now, or should be about as important as they are now?"

	Percent "More Important"			
	Public 1974	Public 1978	Public 1982	Leaders 1982
The President	45%	44%	39%	17%
Secretary of State	30	35	33	22
State Department	39	35	34	34
Congress	48	43	44	34
American Business	21	27	23	22
The Military	19	29	26	3
United Nations	41	39	37	33
The CIA	15	18	16	9
Public Opinion	59	62	54	36
Labor Unions	17	17	17	14
Private Foreign Policy Organizations	na	11	10	21
National Security Advisor	na	na	31	13

larger Congressional role. It also probably reflects some uneasiness — if not resistance — to some specific elements of President Reagan's foreign policy during the past two years.

Turning to other actors in the foreign policy process, the United Nations continues to decline in perceived influence among both the public and the leaders. Only 29% of the public regarded the UN very important while 28% regarded it as hardly important, an increase of 6% over a four-year period. On the leadership side, a similar shift occurred, with only 2% regarding the UN as "very important" and 77% regarding it as "hardly important" — an increase of 9% since 1978. Among both the public and leaders, substantially more thought the UN should play a more important part than thought it should be less important. And about half of the public thought that strengthening the UN should be a "very important" goal of U.S. foreign policy.

Another significant trend relates to the role of the military. Here, the public is on average content with the influence of the military in the foreign policy process (26% for an increase; 26% for a decrease). But on the leadership side there is strong sentiment for a less important military role (48% versus 3% for a more important role), up 9% from 1978. This is another indication of diminished support for the role of the military and defense spending as compared to 1978. It probably reflects increasing resistance to the proposed military buildup during the first two years of the Reagan administration.

A populist view continues to prevail among the public in regard to the role of Congress in the foreign policy process, with 46% regarding Congress as very important and 44% believing it should be even more important — only 11% saying less important. Related to this is the public's continued strong preference for increasing the role of public opinion in foreign policy, with 54% favoring a larger role. It is public opinion and Congress — an institution thought of as more directly responsive to the people — that are given the strongest popular support for an increased role in foreign policy. Over the last eight years, larger roles for Congress and public opinion have consistently received the strongest support, substantially more than the president, the secretary of state, or the State Department. Although the media were not listed among alternative actors, it is significant that television

TABLE VI-3. Reliability of foreign policy information sources—The Public

"We are interested in knowing how reliable you feel various sources of information on foreign policy are: very reliable, somewhat reliable, or hardly reliable at all."

	Very Reliable			Somewhat Reliable			Hardly Reliable At All			Not Sure		
	1974	1978	1982	1974	1978	1982	1974	1978	1982	1974	1978	1982
Television News	35%	30%	32%	50%	53%	56%	13%	14%	8%	2%	3%	4%
Radio News	29	24	25	51	56	57	13	12	8	7	8	10
Magazines	27	21	26	46	50	49	14	15	10	13	14	15
Newspapers	27	26	31	54	53	53	15	15	9	4	6	7
The Presidency	26	32	24	47	48	49	18	15	19	9	5	8
The State Department	36	16	15	42	51	52	15	21	20	7	12	13
Foreign Policy Leaders in Congress	11	11	8	48	46	49	28	27	26	14	16	17
Talking to Friends	11	6	6	41	33	36	39	53	48	9	8	10
Private Foreign Policy Organizations	8	6	6	34	31	34	30	30	27	28	33	33

TABLE VI-4. Apparent disagreements between the public and the Reagan administration --1982.

	Proportion of the Public giving each response		
Military spending and the arms race			
U.S. and U.S.S.R. military power:	About equal 42%	U.S. stronger 21%	U.S.S.R. stronger 29%
Defense spending:	Cut back 34%	Keep the same 36%	Expand 24%
Spending on national defense (asked later in the questionnaire):	Cut back 24%	Keep the same 52%	Expand 21%
Relations with the Soviet Union			
Resuming cultural and educational exchanges:		Favor 70%	Oppose 19%
Undertaking joint efforts to solve energy problems:		Favor 64%	Oppose 23%
Cuba			
Negotiate to reestablish diplomatic and economic relations:		Favor 48%	Oppose 37%
South Africa			
Take a more active role in opposing apartheid:		Agree 45%	Disagree 39%
Western Europe			
Reaction to allies helping Soviets build natural gas pipeline:	Let them pursue policies they think best 37%	Put on diplomatic pressure 27%	Economic sanctions 15%
Vietnam			
War was fundamentally wrong and immoral:		Agree 72%	Disagree 21%
U.S. handling of recent crises			
Declaration of martial law in Poland:		Fair or poor 54%	Excellent or good 24%
Fighting between government and rebels in El Salvador:		Fair or poor 57%	Excellent or good 18%
The Israeli invasion of Lebanon:		Fair or poor 53%	Excellent or good 29%
Military aid			
Giving military aid—arms and equipment—to other nations:		Oppose 63%	Favor 28%
Military aid to other nations:	Cut back 65%	Keep the same 22%	Expand 5%
Selling military equipment to other nations:		Oppose 53%	Favor 39%
Economic aid			
Economic aid to other nations:	Cut back 54%	Keep the same 31%	Expand 8%
CIA			
Place CIA under greater restraint:	Greater restraint 25%	Keep the same 43%	Fewer restrictions 15%
Domestic priorities			
Foreign policy goal of protecting the jobs of American workers:	Very important 77%	Somewhat important 17%	Not important 3%
Federal aid to education:	Expand 59%	Keep the same 31%	Cut back 7%
Social Security:	Expand 49%	Keep the same 40%	Cut back 6%
Biggest problems facing the country today:		Unemployment, recession 64%	

news is regarded as a very reliable source of information on foreign policy by more people (32%) than any other institution — more than the presidency (24%), the State Department (15%), or foreign policy leaders in Congress (8%). Newspapers (31%) rate about the same as television.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND THEIR RELIABILITY

Once again the main source of information about foreign affairs for most of the public was television (cited by 75%), with newspapers second (54%), radio third (23%), and magazines fourth (18%). When asked to assess how reliable various sources of information on foreign policy are, television news once again came out on top with 32% saying "very reliable," about the same as in 1978. Newspapers were second with 31%, which represented a 5% increase over 1978. Magazines (26%) and radio news (25%) were next in line as "very reliable sources." Among all the listed sources, the presidency suffered the biggest drop from 1978, declining from 32% in that year to 24% in 1982. (See Table VI-3)

Once again the media (whether television and radio, newspapers, or magazines) were regarded as more reliable sources of information on foreign policy than the State Department (15%), the presidency (24%), foreign policy leaders in Congress (8%), or private foreign policy organizations (6%). Of course, information from the latter sources usually reaches the public indirectly through the media so that there is some difficulty in distinguishing between their credibility and that of the media.

During the Vietnam and post-Vietnam period, the media were widely regarded by some as a more effective check on the power of the presidency than the constitutionally authorized institutions of Congress. With recently increased critical attention being focused on the various media and especially television, one might expect that this would be reflected in trends about the perceived reliability of sources of information. The data here do not reflect that. Rather, they seem to indicate that the media are still regarded as a necessary and to a considerable extent reliable check on the exercise of power by those in governmental positions.

CONFLICTS BETWEEN PUBLIC OPINION AND THE REAGAN ADMINISTRATION

At various points in this report we have noted discrepancies between current foreign policy and the preferences of the public. Some cases in which public opinion appears to disagree with Reagan administration policy are summarized in Table VI-4.

Perhaps the most important area of conflict concerns military spending and the nuclear arms race. At a time when the administration was urging an arms buildup and preparing a request for a large increase (approximately 14%) in the defense budget for fiscal year 1984, less than one-quarter of the public favored expanding defense spending. The center of gravity of public opinion favored keeping spending the same, and more Americans wanted to cut back spending than wanted to expand it. The administration's argument that the Soviet Union had achieved military superiority was accepted by less than one-third of the public; nearly as many considered the U.S. stronger, and the prevailing opinion held that the superpowers were about equal. (See Table VI-4)

Similarly, only a minority of about one-third of the public opposed a nuclear arms freeze altogether or endorsed President Reagan's position that a freeze should not come until after further U.S. military buildup. A majority (58%) favored a mutual freeze on nuclear weapons right now if the Soviets would agree.

The general public also showed more interest in cooperative relations with the Soviet Union than has been displayed by the administration. Large majorities of 70% and 64% favored cultural and educational exchanges and undertaking joint efforts with the Russians to solve energy problems. A plurality also favored entering into negotiations looking toward reestablishing diplomatic and economic relations and exchanging ambassadors with Cuba. The administration, calling Cuba the chief troublemaker in Central America, has expressed little interest in such negotiations.

The public — by a small plurality — favored a more active role in opposing apartheid in South Africa, whereas most observers would maintain that the administration has moved somewhat in the opposite direction. Only a very small minority (15%) of Americans supported the administration's economic sanctions on Western Europe over the Soviet natural gas pipeline; the sanctions were removed shortly after our survey, ending one conflict between the administration and public opinion. On a matter concerning perspectives rather than specific policies — but perspectives that bear on future involvement abroad — a strong majority (72%) of the public agreed that the war in Vietnam was fundamentally wrong and immoral. President Reagan has repeatedly rejected that view.

Majorities of Americans also gave low marks ("fair" or "poor") to the administration's handling of several foreign policy crises: the declaration of martial law in Poland; fighting between the government and rebels in El Salvador; and the Israeli invasion of Lebanon.

By large majorities (63% and 65%), the American public opposed giving military aid to other nations and favored cutting back money spent for that purpose, at a time when the administration was increasing arms aid. A majority of the public (53%) also opposed *selling* military equipment to other nations, whereas the administration has approved greatly increased arms sales.

Underlining the significance of these policy disagreements, many Americans wanted both Congress and public opinion to play a more important part in making U.S. foreign policy; very few favored a less important role.

Our survey has confirmed what many political observers have noted: the budget priorities of the Reagan administration, emphasizing cuts in domestic programs and large increases in defense spending, directly contradict the priorities held by most members of the public.

A large majority of Americans cited unemployment and the recession as among the biggest problems facing the country, and 77% declared that protecting the jobs of American workers was a very important goal of foreign policy: more endorsed than any other goal. About half of the American people wanted to expand Social Security and federal aid to education while only 6 or 7% favored cuts; this was contrary to the situation on defense spending, where more of the public favored cuts than favored expansion.

One should be cautious in assessing precisely what the discrepancies between the administration and public opinion signify. For one thing, as our report makes clear, on many other issues the Reagan administration and the public are in fairly close agreement. And past administrations, too, have had some conflicts with public opinion. Yet the cases of disagreement highlighted in this section are numerous and important. Compared with those of previous administrations, they seem unusually broad.

TABLE VI-5. Gaps in policy preferences between foreign policy leaders and the public—1982

	Public (% holding opinion)	Leaders (% holding opinion)	Gap (% Leaders minus % Public)
Involvement abroad			
Best to take an active part in world affairs:	54%	98%	+44
Foreign economic aid			
Favor economic aid to other nations for economic development and technical assistance:	50%	94%	+44
Favor economic aid to Central American nations:	45%	91%	+46
Favor economic aid to black African nations:	49%	93%	+44
Tariffs and trade restrictions			
Favor eliminting tariffs and restrictions:	22%	67%	+45
Apartheid in South Africa			
We should take a more active role in opposing apartheid:	45%	79%	+34
Foreign military aid			
Favor giving military aid—arms and equipment—to other nations:	28%	59%	+31
Favor *selling* military equipment to other nations:	39%	68%	+29
Relations with Cuba			
Favor reestablishing relations:	48%	81%	+33
Use of military force			
Goal of defending our allies' security is very important:	50%	82%	+32
Favor use of U.S. troops if Iran invaded Saudi Arabia:	25%	54%	+29
Favor use of U.S. troops if North Korea invaded South Korea:	22%	50%	+28
Favor use of U.S. troops of Soviet troops invaded Western Europe:	65%	92%	+27
Favor use of U.S. troops if Japan were invaded by the Soviet Union:	51%	78%	+27
Favor use of U.S. troops if the Soviet Union invaded Poland:	31%	6%	−25
Agree Vietnam was fundamentally wrong and immoral:	72%	45%	−27
Relations with the Soviet Union			
Oppose restricting U.S.—Soviet trade:	40%	69%	+29
Oppose prohibiting the exchange of scientists between U.S. & U.S.S.R.:	52%	79%	+27
Oppose forbidding grain sales to Soviet Union:	57%	81%	+24
Favor resuming cultural and educational exchanges:	70%	94%	+24
Favor negotiating arms control agreements:	77%	96%	+19
Arms control			
Goal of worldwide arms control is very important:	64%	86%	+22
Favor a mutual freeze on nuclear weapons right now if the Soviets would agree:	58%	79%	+21
U.S. should continue to build nuclear weapons regardless of what the Soviets do:	26%	6%	−20

In a democratic society we would expect to find, at least in the long run, general harmony between the government and the people. One path to harmony is for government to change policy and fall into line with the preferences of its citizens. Another path, if leaders are convinced that the citizenry is misinformed, is for leaders to convince the people to change their minds. So far, on a number of important issues the Reagan administration has neither changed policy nor convinced the public. A third path to harmony, of course, is for the public to change leadership.

Some further insight into these matters may be gained by reviewing the gaps we have noted at various points in this report, between the policy preferences of the general public and those of our sample of foreign policy leaders. If the administration is to convince the public of the rightness of its positions, one would expect that foreign policy leaders would have to bear the heavy burden of using their expertise to establish support for administration views and lead public opinion into agreement. Yet, as we shall see, there is considerable doubt about the ability of these leaders to convince the public, and —perhaps even more important—there is little comfort for the administration in the leaders' opinions. On a number of key matters the leaders disagree with the Reagan administration just as much as, or even more, than the public.

GAPS BETWEEN THE PUBLIC AND FOREIGN POLICY LEADERS

The largest gaps in policy preferences that we found between the public and foreign policy leaders are displayed in Table VI-5. The table gives the percentage of the public favoring a particular position; the percentage of leaders; and the size of the gap between them, that is, the percentage of leaders minus the percentage of the public.

As we have noted before, there is a large gap (44%) in the proportions favoring an active part for the U.S. in world affairs. The leaders express much more internationalist and interventionist sentiments generally, and this is clear on a number of specific topics as well.

The biggest differences are those discussed in Chapter IV on economic relationships. The leaders were much more likely than the public, by about forty-five percentage points, to support economic aid in general and aid to black Africa and Central America in particular. The leaders also were much more in favor of eliminating tariffs and trade restrictions.

The gap was only a little smaller on questions of military aid. About 30% more of the leaders than of the general public favored giving arms and equipment, or selling it, to other nations.

The leaders were also substantially (about 30 percentage points) more likely to favor the use of U.S. troops in a variety of hypothetical situations: an invasion of Saudi Arabia by Iran; of South Korea by North Korea; or of Western Europe or Japan by the Soviet Union. Each of these situations involves major U.S. alliances and/or clearly expressed national interests. In less clear-cut situations, however, the leaders were *less* prone to favor use of troops, most notably in the case of a Soviet invasion of Poland. The leaders also were less favorable than the public toward the use of U.S. troops in the event of a Soviet invasion of China or of imminent defeat by rebels of the government of El Salvador.

At the same time, the leaders were less prone than the public to favor covert operations by the CIA; indeed, a majority of leaders opposed such operations. And the leaders were more favorable toward a variety of cooperative relationships with the Soviet Union: selling grain and trading; engaging in cultural, educational, and scientific exchanges; and negotiating arms control agreements. Many more leaders than members of the general public favored negotiating to reestablish economic and political relations with Cuba.

More leaders favored arms control, as well, and endorsed a mutual freeze on nuclear weapons right now if the Soviets would agree. The leaders also showed somewhat more concern about human rights, at least in the case of actively opposing apartheid in South Africa.

The foreign policy leaders—perhaps by virtue of their very specialization on foreign policy — were substantially less concerned about the domestically-oriented goals of protecting the jobs of American workers or keeping up the value of the American dollar.

Finally, the leaders differed from the public in less often wanting to increase the role of the military or of the president in the making of foreign policy.

For the Reagan administration, these gaps between leaders and public convey a mixed message at best. In some cases the administration can look to these leaders for support of policies that are not popular with the general public. That is particularly true of foreign aid (economic and military) and resistance to tariffs or other trade barriers. It might be true also of certain uses of U.S. troops in clear-cut situations.

But the administration does *not* receive support from the leaders on many of the issues where it is in conflict with public opinion. On military spending, for example, leaders were no more likely than the public to want to expand the defense budget, and indeed substantially more leaders (41%) than members of the public wanted to *cut* it. On arms control, as we have seen, even more leaders than members of the public favored a nuclear freeze.

On cooperative relationships with the Soviet Union, too, the leaders were even more enthusiastic than the public, contrary to the administration's position. The leaders overwhelmingly favored negotiations with that *bête noir* of the administration, Castro's Cuba, and disapproved of the administration's handling of the situation in El Salvador.

The leaders also differed with the administration more than did the public in opposing CIA covert operations and in actively opposing apartheid in South Africa.

On balance, then, there are many areas in which the Reagan administration has been out of tune with the public's desires and in disagreement with foreign policy leaders as well.

We have used the term "leaders" as a shorthand way of referring to our sample of public officials and prominent individuals active in foreign affairs, but of course we cannot be sure just how much influence they actually have, either upon the public or in policymaking itself. Recent scholarly research using our 1974 and 1978 surveys has documented that substantial gaps between leaders and public also existed in those earlier years. Moreover, the gaps were much the same size and concerned much the same topics as in the 1982 survey, suggesting that little if any change of leadership opinion occurred in the interim. (Robert W. Oldendick and Barbara Ann Bardes, "Mass and Elite Foreign Policy Opinions," *Public Opinion Quarterly* 46 (Fall 1982), pp. 368-382.)

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AMERICAN PUBLIC OPINION AND U.S. FOREIGN POLICY 1987

Edited by John E. Rielly

The Chicago Council on Foreign Relations

The objective of the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations is to promote, by all appropriate educational means, public understanding of the foreign policy of the United States. The Council is a non-profit, non-partisan organization which seeks to present a discussion of major foreign policy issues through research, publications, speakers, seminars and conferences.

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Introduction

This report is based on a survey conducted in October/November 1986, shortly before the end of the sixth year of the presidency of Ronald Reagan. Opinions were solicited after the summit meeting between President Reagan and General Secretary Gorbachev in Iceland, but before the news broke in mid-November of the administration's aborted efforts to secure the release of American hostages in the Middle East through secret sales of arms to Iran. In order to verify public sentiment *after* the Iran crisis, a further survey was conducted by the Gallup Organization in mid-January 1987 on selected questions related to the crisis.

Our principal survey was conducted almost two years after the 1984 U.S. presidential election in which President Reagan was overwhelmingly re-elected. Following the collapse of the Iceland summit, many commentators on the American scene were already raising serious questions about the competence of the Reagan administration. Nevertheless, President Reagan continued to enjoy high ratings for the handling of his presidency. In the intervening months since our original data were collected, however, there has been a widespread fear that confidence in the administration's ability to conduct American foreign policy has been seriously eroded, both at home and abroad.

This is the fourth public opinion survey and analysis sponsored by the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations. The data on which it is based were collected exactly twelve years after the first survey, which was in autumn 1974. The second one was done in autumn 1978 and the third four years later in autumn 1982. The results of all of those surveys were summarized and published in 1975, 1979, and 1983 in publications entitled "American Public Opinion and U.S. Foreign Policy."

In the four years since the last study was published, we have witnessed the end of the economic recession that had gripped most of the OECD countries, including the United States. Our last study reflected a preoccupation with economic issues that is not evident in the results of this year's study. The resurgence of the American economy and the strengthening of the European and Japanese economies that followed, combined with the drop in the price of oil, resulted in a relative decline in importance of economic issues compared to four years ago. The decline in oil prices clearly diminished the importance of most of the OPEC countries, including the oil-producing Arab states of the Middle East.

The massive U.S. budget deficits, which were already evident by fall 1982, have continued, and one of the central preoccupations of most world leaders today is the overwhelming indebtedness of the United States, the world's wealthiest country. By autumn 1986, the U.S. had become a debtor nation. Its total debt approached $2.2 trillion, its budget deficits were at a level of $200 billion a year, and its trade deficit had reach $170 billion. The debt crisis four years ago focused principally on the precarious economies of Brazil, Argentina, and Mexico. Today the debt problem is more broadly conceived, the biggest change being the emergence of the United States as the world's biggest debtor.

At the same time, friction between the developed countries on trade issues has intensified rather than abated. Our study does not show any swing in either popular or leadership opinion in favor of protectionist sentiment during the last four years. Nevertheless, such sentiment continues to be strong, especially in the Congress. For the past six years, the Reagan administration has strongly resisted most protectionist pressures, something that many fear it will not be able to do in its weakened condition during its last two years in office.

The survey was also taken at a time when the focus of the Reagan administration had shifted from the exclusive concentration during its first three years on building up the American defense capability. The administration now combined a continued desire to improve American military might with a desire to achieve progress with the Soviet Union on arms control. The overall posture of the administration had changed from the early years. It moved from one of confrontation to one of a desire to reach at least some limited accommodation with the Soviet Union.

A new government in the Soviet Union headed by Mikhail Gorbachev displayed new vitality in governing the Soviet Union and in implementing its external policy. China continued to prosper under Party Leader Deng Xiaoping and continued its experiments with introducing market principles into the Chinese economy. Meanwhile, it continued to expand its contacts with the rest of the world and to welcome greater involvement by foreigners in China. In India a new government headed by Rajiv Gandhi was also beginning to experiment with giving a larger role to the market forces in the economy. Finally, the survey also came at a time that had seen a return to democratic government in Brazil, Argentina, and Uruguay in the western hemisphere and in the Philippines in Asia.

A key question in all of these surveys remains the extent to which the American public and its leaders continue to support an active role for the United States overseas. The question of the role of the United States in the world remains central to this study. In addition, we once again sought to address such issues as the relationship between domestic and foreign policy priorities, the appropriate response to the increasing diplomatic and military reach of the Soviet Union, the shift in foreign policy priorities, and the roles of various individuals and institutions in the implementation of foreign policy.

The Chicago Council on Foreign Relations commissioned the Gallup Organization to conduct this survey of both the general public and national leaders. The survey of the American public involved a stratified, systematic, national sample of 1,585 respondents representing Americans 18 years of age and older. Questions were weighted to eliminate sampling distortion with respect to age, sex, or race. The field work for that part of the study was conducted between October 30 and November 12, 1986. All of these interviews were personal, in-home interviews.

The leadership sample involved 343 interviews of individuals representing Americans in senior positions with knowledge of international affairs. We chose roughly equal proportions from the national political and governmental world, including senators and representatives (members of the Foreign Relations, Foreign Affairs and Armed Services Committees), and officials with international responsibilities from the State, Treasury, Defense, and other Departments. Participants were also drawn from the business community (chairmen and international vice-presidents of large corporations as well as leaders of business associations), the communications field (editors and publishers of major newspapers, wire service executives, television broadcasters), education (presidents and scholars from major colleges and universities), and foreign policy institutes. A smaller number of leaders was also drawn from national unions, churches, voluntary organizations, and various ethnic organizations. Interviews in the leadership survey were conducted between mid-September 1986 and mid-November. Of those interviews, 195 were by telephone, 148 in person.

In addition to the comprehensive surveys, a more limited public survey was completed by the Gallup Organization in mid-January 1987. It tested whether changes of opinion had occurred on selected questions following disclosures about the Iran arms/hostage crisis. One thousand interviews were conducted by telephone between January 14 and 18, 1987.

All interviewing, collating, and tabulating was done through the facilities of the Gallup Organization Incorporated. The design and contents and the questionnaire were prepared, after consultation with the Gallup Organization, by the editor and the following consultants: Bernard Cohen, Acting Chancellor, University of Wisconsin/Madison; Arthur Cyr, Vice President and Program Director of the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations; Benjamin Page, the Frank C. Erwin, Jr., Centennial Professor in Government, University of Texas; William Schneider, Resident Fellow of the American Enterprise Institute; and Bruce L. Peterson, Research Assistant, General Social Survey, National Opinion Research Center.

The figures from the completed survey were organized and compiled by the Gallup Organization. The analysis and interpretation of data presented in this report represents the joint efforts of the above group working with the editor. Once again, we have published the analysis of the data as quickly as possible after the field work was completed. The response to earlier reports confirms our judgment that the advantages of a brief but timely summary analysis outweigh the disadvantages of being able to do a comprehensive study in so short a period of time. The report should be considered in that light. The data derived from this survey will be placed on deposit with the Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research at the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor and the Roper Center for Public Opinion in Storrs, Connecticut. It will be available to scholars.

I want to take this opportunity to express my thanks and appreciation to my principal collaborators: Bernard Cohen, Arthur Cyr, Benjamin Page, Bruce Peterson, and William Schneider. Special thanks are due Nora Dell, editor and director of publications of the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations, who once again played a critical role in every stage of the project, arranged for the design and layout of the report, and was responsible for all aspects of the publication. Special thanks are also due to Linda Crance, Lisa Heinrich, Joy Lewis, and Rhonda Sibille, who displayed skill and persistence in putting the manuscript on the word processor and seeing it through to completion.

On behalf of the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations, I want to express our gratitude to the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, and especially to President John Corbally and Executive Vice President James Furman, for financing the entire project, including the preparation, publication, and dissemination of this report.

John E. Rielly
President
The Chicago Council on Foreign Relations
February 15, 1987

Summary Findings

Throughout the 1970s, public opinion surveys sponsored by the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations (CCFR) confirmed that the American public had developed a preoccupation with such issues as inflation, unemployment, and energy. It was inclined to withdraw from international responsibility, and harbored a feeling of military weakness and insecurity. Concern over these issues has now receded. A growing appreciation of the importance of foreign affairs is evident, combined with a desire for a larger U.S. world role. Both the American public and its leaders now believe that a favorable military balance has been restored with the Soviet Union and that the United States plays a more important role in the world. But while Americans now feel more secure, their support for increased defense spending is diminishing. Even so, most Americans are prepared to continue defense efforts at their current level.

One consequence of these perceptions and feelings is continued support for arms control and slightly increased support for certain measures associated with *detente* with the Soviet Union. But in contrast to their support for the Reagan administration's restoration of the military balance, most Americans do not support some of the more aggressive elements of its foreign policy, including its military intervention abroad, its active promotion of democracy, and its implementation of the Reagan Doctrine through covert action against communist-oriented regimes in Afghanistan, Angola, and Nicaragua.

Despite growing friction between the United States and its principal partners in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development over trade and financial issues, the public's highly favorable attitude toward Western Europe and Japan continues; in the case of Japan, somewhat surprisingly, it even improves. However, since the beginning of this decade American interest in and sympathy toward the Middle East has declined. Public willingness to commit troops in crises involving Western Europe and Japan is greater than ever, but the reluctance to commit troops in other areas of the world, including Central America, continues unchanged.

Americans remain self-interested, and the desire to protect American jobs or to secure access to energy still takes priority over such altruistic objectives as promoting democracy, defending human rights, or improving other countries' standards of living.

Large gaps continue between public and leadership attitudes and, on many issues, between the views of the public and the leadership and those expressed by Reagan administration officials. The attitudes of outside leaders and government officials are closer to one another than to the general public. But an interesting development is the emergence of notable gaps between the views of administration officials and those of labor, media, educational, and religious leaders.

These are some of the principal conclusions reached in this report by the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations on American public opinion and U.S. foreign policy. This study is based on the following:

1. Personal interviews with a nationwide statistically valid random sample of 1,585 adult men and women in the U.S., carried out from late-October through mid-November by the Gallup Organization.
2. Personal and telephone interviews with a leadership sample of 343 prominent individuals in the United States from government, business, labor, academia, the mass media, religious institutions, private foreign policy organizations and special interest groups, conducted between the end of September and late-November. Those were also conducted by Gallup.
3. Because of the Iran crisis, in mid-January 1987, the Chicago Council had the Gallup Organization retest certain questions among the public sample by telephone. No significant variation occurred with respect to these questions except for a decline in the public's evaluation of Ronald Reagan's overall foreign policy and specifically his handling of terrorism.

The 1986 surveys were the fourth in a series of studies carried out by the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations. Previous public and leadership surveys were conducted in 1974, 1978 and 1982.

ECONOMIC CONCERNS AND SELF-INTEREST

Concern about economic issues generally, including unemployment and inflation, has declined in relative importance. A majority of Americans continue to view foreign economic policy through the lens of self-interest, but the perceived importance and interdependence of the United States economy and foreign policy declined over the past four years. While a majority of Americans still see foreign policy as having a major impact on gasoline prices, the value of the dollar abroad, and unemployment, there has been a significant drop in the level of concern. Despite the global abundance of oil supplies, access to energy supplies continues to be important and Saudi Arabia is still perceived by the public as one of the top countries in terms of vital interest to the United States. Among leaders, great concern was expressed about the federal fiscal deficit, national debt and excessive government spending. A total of 57% of those polled cited concerns related to this subject, an increase of 45% since the 1982 leadership survey.

At the same time, despite the massive trade deficit, the last four years saw a measurable decline in public support for protectionist measures as well as modest growth in support for economic aid to other nations. The leadership sample continued strongly in favor of free trade – two thirds favored eliminating tariffs on imported goods and less than 30% believed that tariffs are necessary. As has been the case consistently, the weight of public sentiment is the reverse; 53% of the public believed tariffs and trade restrictions to be necessary, only 20% favored their elimination. Over the past decade, however, the two opinion trends have moved toward one another. Leaders are slightly more protectionist and the public somewhat less so. The gap has been narrowed by 15% over the past eight years.

Another foreign policy issue with powerful economic overtones is relations with the government of South Africa. A total of 57% of the public and 79% of the leaders favored either limited or stringent economic sanctions against the South African government.

INTERNATIONALISM

Also receding is the "inward-looking" attitude that characterized the American people throughout the 1970s. The leadership group has remained virtually unanimous over the past decade that the United States should play an active world role. Among the public, those who said that the United States should play "a more active role in the world" rose from 54 percent in 1982 to 64 percent in 1986. The proportion of the population very interested in news about other countries or about U.S. relations with other countries also has shown a steady rise. Indeed, news concerning America's relations with other countries now ranks second in importance after local news, having overtaken national news.

Another striking finding of the current survey was the much greater percentage of both the public and leaders responding that the United States plays a "more important" role in the world compared with ten years ago. A total of 41% of the public felt that the United States now has a more important role, compared to 27% who selected this option in 1982; 33% of the leaders felt this way compared to only 10% in 1982. Totals of 26% of the public and 27% of the leaders believed that the United States is less important, compared to respective figures of 44% and 52% four years ago. Consistent with this trend toward greater internationalism is the marginally greater support for foreign economic and military aid on the part of the public.

AREAS OF VITAL CONCERN

As in previous surveys, both the public and the leaders saw the United States as having vital interests in many different countries. Attitudes toward particular nations have been remarkably consistent over time, especially in regard to Western Europe, Japan and our neighbors, where high perceived vital interests are registered. A high percentage of leaders and the public see a vital interest in Western Europe and the Western Hemisphere, where the United States has strong cultural, political and economic as well as security ties. In the case of Canada and Latin America, geographic proximity is also an important factor. Japan remains America's principal trading and security partner in Asia as well as an economic competitor in industrialized markets. Vital interests are also perceived in the Middle East, especially in connection with Israel, Egypt and Saudi Arabia.

Leaders generally have a more inclusive view of national vital interests, although their priority areas in most cases are the same. Despite the strong disagreements between the United States and allies in Europe and Japan over the past four years, those areas along with Canada and Mexico continue to be rated most highly. Over the years, the top countries in terms of perceived vital interests by the public and leaders have generally remained the same. In 1986, those countries were for the public Great Britain, Canada, Japan, the Federal Republic of Germany, Saudi Arabia, and Israel. For opinion leaders, the top six countries in 1986 were the Federal Republic of Germany, Japan, Mexico, Canada, Great Britain and the People's Republic of China. Countries whose perceived importance has increased notably since 1982 include for the public India, Italy, South Africa, South Korea and Syria; and for the leaders South Africa and South Korea.

When the public was also asked to rank countries in terms of warmth or coolness felt toward them, once again, the same countries tended to appear. The top countries here were: Canada, Great Britain, the Federal Republic of Germany, Japan, Mexico and Israel. Japan, with a "mean temperature" of 61 degrees, increased by 8 degrees over the past four years, a surprising result given the significant friction between the U.S. and Japan and the harsh criticism by American political and governmental, business and trade union leaders. The Phillippines was included for the first time in 1986 and was ranked seventh by the public at 59 degrees.

EUROPE

The high priority devoted to relations with Western Europe is evident in continued strong support by the American public as well as leaders for the military alliance with those nations and Canada, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. On a par with the levels of support of four years ago, 70% of the public and 85% of the leaders believe that we should support either increased or the same level of military commitment to NATO. Similarly, when the leadership sample was asked to choose between leaving American troops in Europe for the time being or withdrawing over the next five years and letting Europe provide for their own nuclear as well as conventional military defense, 82% of the respondents favored the status quo over the change. This is noteworthy given the continuing discussion in the United States about the advisability of our conventional military presence on the continent of Europe.

A series of additional questions posed to the leadership sample indicated no apparent shift in priorities toward Asia at the expense of Europe. When asked which area is more important to the U.S., 46% of the leaders chose Europe and 18% Asia, while 34% indicated that the two regions are of equal importance. American leaders were markedly favorable to Europe over Asia as the preferred region for post-graduate study for a son or daughter, by 69% to 15%. A related question on language preferences indicated strong support for Spanish (34%) and French (22%) over Japanese (16%) and Chinese (12%). There is evidence that among the leadership group, those in Congress were somewhat more favorable than Administration representatives to leaving troops in Europe and post-graduate study in Europe, although the sample tested here was small.

THE MIDDLE EAST

Another priority in recent years, the Middle East, has declined somewhat in perceived importance for United States foreign policy. This was true when considering the most important foreign policy problems facing the country or the significance of oil supply/energy matters. At the same time, Israel's favorability rating among the public has increased over the past four years; and Israel and Saudi Arabia are viewed among those countries of highest vital interest to the United States. Not surprisingly, Iran was at the bottom of the thermometer for the public at 23 degrees, below the Soviet Union at 32 degrees and Syria at 34 degrees.

MILITARY ISSUES

Among the most pronounced shifts in public and leaders views during the course of the four Chicago Council on Foreign Relations surveys have been those related to defense spending. Between 1974 and 1978, support for increased defense spending grew substantially. The Council surveys combined with other polls indicate that the period of the late 1970's until early-1981 witnessed a sharp shift of American public opinion in favor of increased defense spending. In 1974, sentiment for cutting back outweighed sentiment for increasing the defense budget by as much as three to one. By 1978 there was twice as much sentiment for expanding as for reducing the defense budget. The 1982 survey indicated a reversal of this trend, with a strong consensus—a majority among the public – for maintaining current levels of defense spending rather than increasing or reducing. In 1986 sentiment among both public and leaders favors keeping the status quo and is opposed to further increases in defense spending. While this does not provide encouragement for the Reagan administration effort to expand the Pentagon budget, there is no great public sentiment for cutting back defense spending from current levels.

An important factor behind this lack of support for more defense spending is the perception of national strength, related to the view, especially on the part of the public, that the United States is now on a par with or superior to the Soviet Union in military terms. Earlier polls indicated a sense of inferiority vis-a-vis the other superpower. A major accomplishment of the Reagan administration has been the establishment of this perception within the United States.

More than in other areas, political partisanship seems to be a major factor in attitudes on defense spending. There is a strong correlation between Democratic party affiliation and support for cutting back defense spending and Republican affiliation and desire to expand defense spending. This association, already notable in 1982, has increased over the past four years. Evidence of earlier opinion polls shows that partisanship during the entire post-war period appears to correlate strongly with attitudes on defense spending. In earlier years, specifically the 1950's and early 1960's, however, the relationship was the reverse – Democrats tended to be more in favor of defense spending, Republicans much less enthusiastic.

RELATIONS WITH THE SOVIET UNION

In 1986, as in 1982, both the public and leaders were concerned about the dangers of war and progress in arms control efforts with the Soviet Union. In 1986, 10% of the public sample mentioned nuclear war and related issues when asked to cite the two or three biggest problems facing the country today. By contrast, in 1978 so few respondents mentioned war or nuclear war as a principal concern that the response was not separately reported. Among leaders, 17% in 1986 cited arms control or lack of arms agreements as among the biggest problems facing the country. By contrast, only about 1% were registered in this category in 1982 and 1978. Twenty-two percent of the public cited relations with the Soviet Union as among the foreign policy problems of most concern to them, compared to 15% who cited this theme in 1982.

There continues to be strong support for arms control and related cooperative measures with the Soviet Union on the part of both the public and leaders. A total of 80% of the public and 95% of the leaders favored negotiating arms control agreements between the two superpowers; 78% of the public and 98% of the leaders are for resumption of cultural and educational exchanges; 57% of the public and 82% of the leaders want to have increased grain sales to the Soviet Union; only 37% of the public and 24% of the leaders want to restrict U.S.-Soviet trade. The only strong opposition to cooperative endeavors is in such sensitive areas of sales of advanced computers, sharing technical information with the Soviets about defending against missile attacks, and – a question asked only of the leaders – subsidizing grain sales to the Soviets. This strong support for cooperative ventures with the Soviet Union have been consistent over a long period of time. The current perception that the United States is stronger vis-a-vis the Soviet Union has to some extent reinforced the already substantial support for detente.

Regarding nuclear weapons specifically, the public and especially opinion leaders continue to believe the United States should stop building nuclear weapons only if the Soviet Union agrees to do the same. A total of 58% of the public and 79% of the leaders feel this way. There was a slight decline in support for the position that the United States should stop building nuclear weapons even if the Soviet Union does not.

A mutual freeze on nuclear weapons was also strongly supported, as in 1982; 67% of the public and 77% of the leaders would favor a mutual freeze immediately if the Soviets would agree. Only 14% of the public and 8% of the leaders felt that we should have a freeze only after the United States builds up more nuclear weapons.

INTERVENTIONISM

There was a continuation of the long-term trend of gradually increased public willingness to commit United States troops in selected circumstances overseas. A majority of the public and leaders would be willing to send United States troops if either Japan or Western Europe were invaded by the Soviet Union. On the other hand, there is a reluctance to commit American troops in other circumstances. Majorities of the public were opposed to use of troops if North Korea invaded South Korea, the Arabs cut off oil shipments to the United States, Nicaragua invaded Honduras in order to destroy contra rebel bases, the government of El Salvador were about to be defeated by guerrillas or Arab forces invaded Israel. The leadership group was much more favorably disposed to the use of troops, as has been the case in earlier surveys. Majorities were in favor of use of troops not only in cases of Western Europe or Japan already cited, but if Arabs forces invaded Israel, North Korea invaded South Korea, or the Nicaraguan government allowed the Soviet Union to establish a missile base in that country. The public response was evenly divided regarding the Nicaragua missile base question. A plurality of 45% favored using troops but 42% were opposed. Generally, the willingness to use troops overseas is closely related to perceptions of vital interest.

ROLES OF CONGRESS, CIA

The public and leaders were generally supportive of the administration in the fall of 1986, especially in comparison with 1982, on the appropriate role of Congress in foreign policy. Those who believed the Congressional role was too weak declined substantially among both groups. Those who viewed Congress' role as being too strong went up slightly on the public side and significantly on the leadership side. The January 1987 poll showed some increase in public support for a stronger role by Congress. A similar shift occurred in both public and leadership attitudes on whether the CIA should be encouraged to work covertly to weaken or overthrow governments unfriendly to the United States. A substantial 13 point change occurred among leaders in terms of greater support for the covert role by the CIA and there was an equally sharp drop in those opposed. A smaller change occurred among the public.

GAPS AMONG THE ADMINISTRATION, THE PUBLIC, AND THE LEADERS

A substantial gap continued between the views of leaders and the public on a large number of foreign policy issues. In some areas, the views of both are in conflict with the policies and performance of the Reagan administration. Leaders continue to favor a more activist role for the United States in the world, are generally more interventionalist and more supportive of the "Reagan Doctrine" of backing anti-communist guerrillas in some countries around the world. Leaders continue to be more internationalist, notably in support of free trade and military as well as economic foreign aid. Leaders give a high priority to defending allies' security as a foreign policy goal and lower emphasis on strengthening the United Nations. They are generally less concerned about protecting American jobs at home or promoting American business overseas. Leaders are less inclined to endorse the goal of "containing communism" but more disposed to consider as a "great threat" the coming to power of a communist government in specific countries such as Mexico, Saudi Arabia or France. By a large margin of 42%, leaders support military aid to other nations and are considerably less worried about aid to Central America leading to United States military involvement there. Leaders are overwhelmingly opposed to negotiating with terrorists, as is the public; they are more inclined than the public to favor use of military force against terrorist groups, but less inclined to favor the assassination of terrorist leaders.

On relations with the Soviet Union, both leaders and public give a higher priority to cooperative endeavors than has the Reagan administration, and are critical of the administration's handling of relations with the Soviet Union. Both are also critical of the administration's performance on the Middle East, international trade policy, human rights and terrorism.

In addition, there were notable differences, within the leadership sample on the defense budget, the "Reagan Doctrine," the covert role of the CIA and a number of others. There were significant differences between administration representatives and other leadership categories, especially labor, media, education and religion, on support for the invasion of Grenada, the effort to overthrow the government of Nicaragua, the bombing of Libya and increased defense spending.

One important overall result that emerges from this survey is that public support for a more active United States role in the world has increased. This represents a change from earlier surveys and doubtless reflects the perception of favorable change in the United States/Soviet military balance and the higher estimation of the role that the United States actually plays, as well as the role the nation should play, in the world. In sum, while there is sharp disagreement with the Reagan administration on specific policy matters, there is also considerable support for the Administration's restoration of the military balance – and greater confidence in the America's world role.

I. Priority of Foreign Policy

We may begin this analysis of public opinion and foreign policy by first asking how important foreign policy issues are for Americans today – both for the public and for leaders in the United States. How does the priority attached to foreign affairs compare with that accorded domestic policy issues? How closely do people follow these different sorts of issues – both generally and in specific terms? To put the matter a little differently, what is their "map" of public affairs, and how and where does foreign policy fit into it? In a period when economic problems have receded a bit in the developed world, where is the international horizon?

ATTENTIVENESS TO FOREIGN AFFAIRS

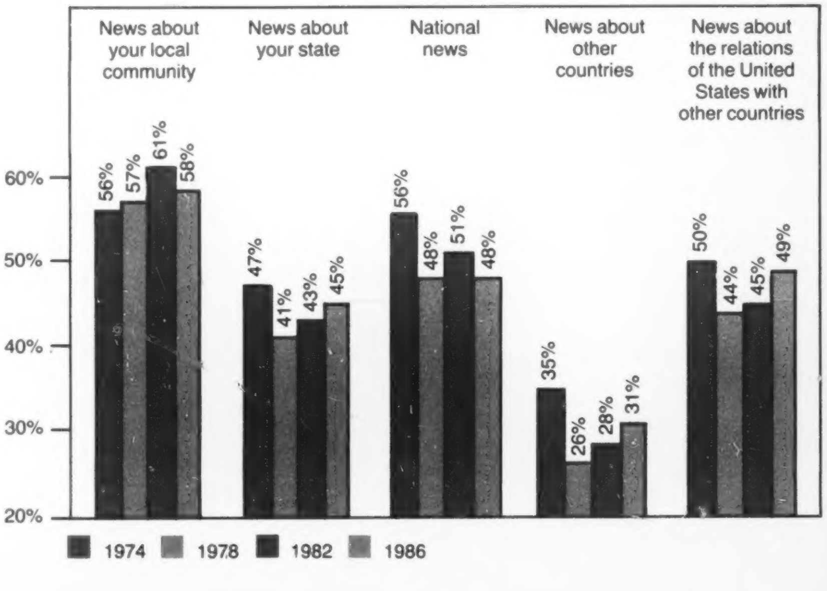
Following a full generation of intense international activism after World War II, a generation in which the primacy of foreign policy was rarely challenged, the decade of the 1970s was characterized by many commentators as "quiescent and inward-looking"; the proportion of those approving an active role in world affairs for the U.S. declined from the 70% range of the 1950s to 59% in 1978. That characterization of "inward-looking" seemed to us to be still applicable in 1982 when only 54% approved an active role. But we now see signs of a reaffirmation of active interest in foreign policy as we move into the latter part of the decade. As the ravages of inflation have receded, and as we have climbed up from the recession that afflicted the United States and much of the world in the early 1980s, we find a noticeable disposition to look outward once more. Sixty-four percent of the public now think it will be best for the future of the country if we take an active part in world affairs, a 10% jump over the past four years (see Chapter II).

With a perspective of the last eight years, we can see (in Figure I-1) a slow but steady increase in the proportion of the population that is very interested in news about other countries and in news about U.S. relations with other countries, while interest in local and national news is essentially at 1978 levels. Furthermore, while the American public is still more interested in local news than in any other kind, news concerning our relations with other countries now ranks second in public interest, having overtaken national news. The Reykjavik summit meeting in October 1986 may have had an impact on these figures, but they are consonant with the results of other questions that suggest an increasing international awareness.

In comparing this general interest in news of different types with the expressed interest in news about specific events, the proportion of the population that follows specific events in the news seems to be growing also. At the same time, this proportion is somewhat smaller than the proportion declaring a general interest in such news. For example, while 49% declare that they are "very interested" in news about relations with other countries, only 20% say they have followed news about the fighting in Central America "very closely" (up from 15% in 1982), and only 29% say the same about negotiations on strategic arms limitations (up from 22% in 1982).

On the basis of responses to questions about interest in news about other countries and in news about U.S. relations with other countries, and about how closely people followed news about four events (fighting in Central America, problems in the Middle East, negotiations for strategic arms limitations, and events in South Africa), we have constructed an index of attentiveness to foreign affairs news. Those who scored in the top third on the additive

FIGURE I-1 (The Public)
PERCENT VERY INTERESTED IN VARIOUS TYPES OF NEWS
1974, 1978, 1982, 1986



scale of attentiveness we call the "attentive public," and we from time to time draw attention to the differences between the views of this group and the views of the medium and low attentives on particular subjects. In 1986 the size of the attentive public was 23% of the sample.

FOREIGN POLICY AND THE NATIONAL AGENDA

When we asked people about the biggest problems confronting the country today, we discovered a striking shift that reflects the rising sensitivity to foreign affairs and a commensurate decline in concern for the economic issues that had been predominant since the end of the Vietnam War. The result now is a more evenly distributed concern for economic and social as well as foreign policy issues than has been apparent for many years. Only time will tell whether the country is drifting back toward the "normal" post World War II situation, when foreign policy issues dominated media attention and public concerns.

Overall, Table I-1 shows the sharp decline in economic problems (and in related energy problems) particularly over the last four years, the rise in selected social issues, and the increase in the *relative* attention being paid to a battery of foreign policy concerns: 26% of the "biggest problems facing the government" in 1986 were foreign policy problems. In 1982 the comparable figure was 15% and in 1978 only 11%. Put a little differently, foreign policy problems have more than doubled in their importance to the American people in the last eight years. This general trend holds also for the leadership sample: In 1986, 42% of the "biggest problems" identified by the leaders were foreign policy problems, compared with 29% in 1982 and 23% in 1978.

In 1978 inflation was clearly the biggest problem. It was cited by 67% of the public and by 85% of the leadership sample. In 1982 unemployment was the chief concern, cited by 64% of the public and for 53% of the leaders. As the rate of inflation dropped precipitously from 1978 to 1986, and as unemployment subsided from 1982 to 1986, both of these issues lost their prominence. Unemployment is still one of the biggest problems, mentioned by one-fourth of the population, but it is matched now by a concern for drug abuse, which was not featured in public responses in the past, and for war, peace, and defense issues.

Among the leadership sample, unemployment and drug abuse are also treated equally, but at a much lower level–7% and 8% respectively. Two issues that stand out as biggest problems for this group are government spending (at 57%, it exceeds the 1982 leaders' concern over unemployment) and the balance of payments (26%).

The group of foreign policy issues on this list of "biggest problems" shows a rise in the number of differentiated concerns that are troubling the American people. Arms control, relations with the Soviet Union, and terrorism (a new issue in the list) are now seen as more important than many others, while nuclear issues continue their rise. Among the leaders, the balance of payments problem (26%), arms control (17%) and U.S.–Soviet relations (16%) are seen as the most important problems after government spending and generalized references to the economy.

PRIORITIES AMONG GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS

Another way to weigh the relative importance of foreign policy in the thinking of our respondents is to compare the government programs that they would like to see

Table I-1. Most important problems

"What do you feel are the two or three biggest problems facing the country today?"[1]

	Public			Leaders		
	1986	1982	1978	1986	1982	1978
ECONOMY						
Unemployment	26%	64%	19%	7%	53%	25%
Inflation	8	35	67	2	19	85
Taxes	6	6	18	2	3	6
Energy	1	3	11	1	2	23
Other	17	22	n.a.*	32	58	n.a.
GOVERNMENT						
Excessive spending	**12**	**5**	**9**	**57**	**12**	**13**
Other	**10**	**13**	**17**	**8**	**10**	**22**
SOCIAL PROBLEMS AND POLICY						
Crime	10	16	9	4	3	2
Welfare	2	3	8	2	1	3
Drug abuse	27	3	1	8	1	1
Immorality	7	6	2	4	5	3
Poverty	10	2	3	6	2	3
Education	5	2	4	6	4	3
Other	30	19	21	18	14	32
FOREIGN POLICY						
Foreign economic problems	**7**	**4**	**4**	**33**	**10**	**10**
Regional problems	**4**	**2**	**1**	**5**	**2**	**4**
War/peace/defense	**25**	**18**	**8**	**44**	**37**	**27**
Relations with USSR, and other Communist countries	**7**	**2**	**2**	**16**	**12**	**8**
Terrorism	**5**	**n.a.**	**n.a.**	**2**	**n.a.**	**n.a.**
Other	**13**	**10**	**9**	**12**	**17**	**18**
None, Don't know	3	2	4	*	*	0
Sum of percentages	235[2]	237	217	269	265	288
Foreign policy problems as percentage of total	26%	15%	11%	42%	29%	23%

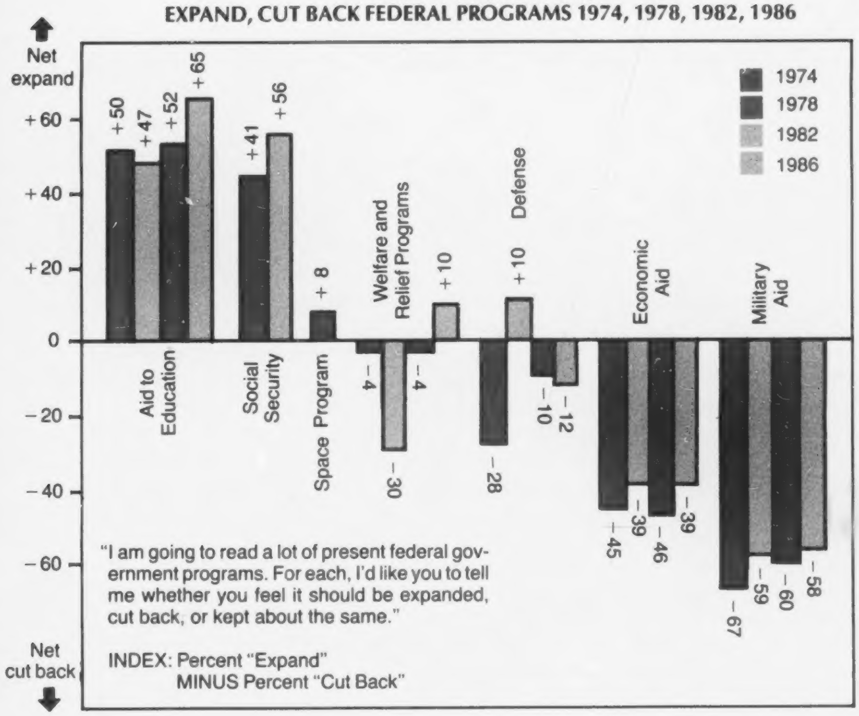
[1] There is a very slight change in the wording of this question since 1978, when we asked respondents to name "the two or three biggest problems facing the country today that you would like to see the federal government do something about." Because the role of the federal government in the solution of national problems itself became perceived as a political problem since the 1980 elections, we decided that comparability with prior surveys would be enhanced if we dropped the qualifying phrase "that you would like to see the federal government do something about."

[2] The sum of percentages exceeds 100% because of multiple responses.

*Less than ½%

*n.a. = not asked

FIGURE 1-2 (The Public)
EXPAND, CUT BACK FEDERAL PROGRAMS 1974, 1978, 1982, 1986



expanded with those they would like to cut back. For this purpose we listed three foreign policy programs – defense spending and economic and military aid to foreign nations; three domestic programs – education, welfare and relief programs, and social security; and the space program, which has both foreign policy and domestic dimensions. Of these seven programs, we have a good trend line on five, and a start on a sixth (social security). As in past reports, we have calculated an index of support for each program by subtracting the percentage of those who wanted it cut back from the percentage of those who wanted it expanded. Results for all four surveys are shown in Figure I-2, where positive scores – those above the line – indicate net public support for expansion of programs, and negative scores – those below the line – indicate net public desire to cut them back. For example, the score of +55 for social security is derived from 60% who wish to see the program expanded and 5% who wish to see it cut back.

Figure I-2 shows the continued priority accorded by the public to domestic programs over foreign policy programs. All three foreign policy programs have negative scores (−58, −36, −12); three domestic programs have positive scores (+65, +55, +10); and the space program, with a foot in both camps, stands slightly on the plus side (+7). There can be no question that the American people as a whole would rather see their government invest in social programs before investing in defense and foreign military and economic assistance.

A rapid glance at Figure I-2 tells us that both economic and military aid have been the least-favored programs over the twelve-year period of these surveys and that there have been only small changes in public preferences with respect to them over time. Aid to education and social security, on the other hand, continue to enjoy the public's favor. Welfare and relief programs, which dropped sharply in popularity eight years ago, have dramatically regained their ground, probably as a consequence of the greater concern about unemployment after 1978.

The space program is new to this list. In the wake of the "Challenger" disaster, it is interesting to note that the program enjoys a small margin of public support.

Net public sentiment on defense spending continues to be negative. In 1978 defense had turned around the net negative evaluation it had suffered since the Vietnam War; indeed, President Reagan came into office with a pledge to increase defense spending to make up for the years during which it had lost public favor. But by 1982 the figures of 1978 were reversed. In 1978, 34% wanted to expand defense spending and 24% wanted to cut it back (a net +10); in 1982, 24% wanted to expand it and 34% wanted to cut it back (a net −10). In 1986, 22% wanted to expand it, and 34% continued to want to cut it back (a net −12). Factors that account for the continued net negative support for defense spending, and which are evident at other points in this survey, must include growing concern about the threat of nuclear war; growing realization of the impact that defense spending is having on more favored social programs; and, of course, an understanding that President Reagan has already expanded defense spending by a substantial amount, creating the perception that he has succeeded in changing the international military balance in America's favor (see Chapter V).

II. Foreign Policy Goals: Perceptions and Performance

U.S. INVOLVEMENT IN WORLD AFFAIRS

Early in this century many Americans hoped to avoid entangling alliances and to minimize U.S. involvement in world affairs. But the experience of World War II and the Cold War transformed the public's attitudes. Ever since the 1940s a large and fairly stable proportion of the public – usually about two-thirds of it – has said that we should "take an active part" in world affairs rather than "stay out." The exact percentage in favor of an active part has risen or fallen depending upon circumstances. The unhappy experience of the Vietnam War led to a slight increase in neo-isolationism. The late 1970s and early 1980s also appear to have been a time of some discouragement and skepticism about the part the U.S. should or could play in the world. On the other hand, there is evidence of a post-Vietnam rebound in the early 1970s and a rise of activism in the middle 1980s. All these changes have been fairly small and temporary, however. (See Table II-1.)

In particular, the rather low level of activism expressed in 1982 (a year of a troubled American economy) jumped right back up to the usual postwar range in 1986. The suggestion in our 1983 report of a possible "slow retreat" from activism now seems to have been premature.

As one might expect, foreign policy leaders are much more committed to an active role. In fact they have been virtually unanimous on this point in every one of our surveys since 1974. Members of the public with high levels of formal education tend to agree with the leaders on this point. In 1986, for example, 77% of the college educated but only 33% of those with a grade school education thought we should take an active part in world affairs.

Table II-1. Desires for an active U.S. role in world affairs
(Percentage saying U.S. should take an active part in world affairs)

	Public		Leaders	
	active part	stay out	active part	stay out
1986	64%	27%	98%	1%
1982	54	35	98	1
1978	59	29	97	1
1974	66	24	n.a.*	n.a.
1973	66	31	n.a.	n.a.
1956	71	25	n.a.	n.a.
1952	68	23	n.a.	n.a.
1948	70	24	n.a.	n.a.

*n.a. = not asked

The rebound in public activism during the 1980s may well be related to the Reagan administration's foreign policy, which in the autumn of 1986 – before the unfolding of the Iranian arms scandal – was popular in certain respects. An indication of this is the big jump in public perceptions that the U.S. in fact "plays a more important and powerful role as the world leader today as compared to ten years ago" rather than a "less important" or "as important" a role. The modest 27% of the public that saw a more powerful role in 1982 (about the same as in 1978 and 1974) rose a full 14 percentage points, to 41%, in 1986. The leaders' assessments on this point changed even more dramatically: the weak 10% perception of a "more important role" in 1982 rose a remarkable 23 percentage points, to 33%, in 1986. (See Table II-2.)

Although our most recent survey provides a considerable amount of unhappy news for the Reagan administration, this particular finding indicates one outstanding success. Both the general public and our sample of leaders were far more convinced that the U.S. had become a more important and powerful world leader in 1986 than they had been in 1982. Amer-

Table II-2. Perceptions of the U.S. as a world leader as compared to ten years before.

	Public		Leaders	
	more important and powerful	less important	more important and powerful	less important
1986	41%	26%	33%	27%
1982	27	44	10	52
1978	29	41	16	59
1974	28	38	n.a.*	n.a.

*n.a. = not asked

icans were more self-confident. As we will see, this sense of security contributed to a desire for arms control and détente.

Table II-3. Perceptions of foreign policy problems. (Percentages of the total number of "biggest problem" responses.)

	Public			Leaders		
	1986	1982	1978	1986	1982	1978
War, arms race with USSR	31%	29%	20%	36%	39%	29%
Terrorism	13	0	0	5	0	0
General foreign policy	15	23	22	15	18	18
U.S. economy	13	13	17	13	9	13
Latin America	7	3	4	12	8	3
Middle East	5	13	13	6	15	18
South Africa	3	1	2	5	1	6
Europe	2	5	1	3	6	2
Asia	0	1	2	1	2	8
Miscellaneous and don't know	11	12	19	4	2	3
Total responses	100	100	100	100	100	100

PERCEPTIONS OF FOREIGN POLICY PROBLEMS

In our surveys we have regularly asked people not only to name one or more of the biggest problems facing the country (as discussed in Chapter I), but also to name the two or three biggest *foreign policy* problems facing the United States. The responses are displayed in Table II-3. First, of course, many Americans see the arms race and danger of nuclear war as a crucial foreign policy problem. In 1986 about half of the people mentioned them. Or, to put it another way, about one-third of all the *responses* concerned nuclear war and the arms race, up substantially from 29% in 1982 and only 20% in 1978. The militant rhetoric and deterioration in U.S. – Soviet relations of the Reagan years appear to have increased Americans' concerns about nuclear war. Foreign policy leaders focused even more sharply than the public on war and the arms race, with virtually everyone mentioning them; 36% of the total "important problem" responses related to that subject in 1986 and 1982, up from 29% in 1978.

International terrorism was much in the public mind in 1986. Twenty-one percent of the general public mentioned it, after no such responses (or at least no such coding category) in 1982 or 1978. The leaders also cite terrorism for the first time in 1986, but only 11% did so. To put it another way, terrorism took up 15% of the public's multiple responses but only 5% of the more numerous responses by leaders. Undoubtedly this concern about terrorism contributed to the public's shock when U.S. arms sales to Iran were revealed.

Although their relative importance declined, economic issues were cited by many members of the public. Fifteen percent mentioned the balance of trade, up a bit from 1982. (Only 2% mentioned the relatively new issue of immigration of illegal aliens, about the same as in 1982.) Foreign policy leaders devoted a smaller part of their responses to such concerns, but 17% of them (down slightly from 1982) mentioned the balance of trade.

Between 1982 and 1986 there was one significant shift in the geographical areas of concern. In 1978 and in 1982 (when our survey was conducted during the Israeli occupation of Lebanon) the Middle East provoked a great deal of worry. In the more tranquil year 1986, mentions of Middle East problems dropped substantially on both the public and leadership levels.

By the same token, concerns about Latin America – especially Nicaragua, where the Contra war continued, and Mexico, where economic and political stability had come into question – rose between 1982 and 1986. This was especially true among the leaders; the 3% who mentioned it as a problem in 1978 became 8% in 1982 and 12% in 1986 (Table II-3).

South Africa's system of apartheid and the issue of U.S. trade and investment in South Africa were prominent in the headlines in 1986, and 3% of the public mentioned these as important problems, up from virtually none in the earlier surveys. Five percent of the leaders cited South African issues.

Although Europe received a high priority

Table II-4. Foreign policy goals for the United States, 1986

(Percent "very important")

	Public	Leaders
Protecting the jobs of American Workers	78%	43%
Securing adequate supplies of energy	69	72
Worldwide arms control	69	83
Combatting world hunger	63	60
Reducing U.S. trade deficit with foreign countries	62	n.a.*
Containing communism	57	43
Defending U.S. allies' security	56	78
Matching Soviet military power	53	59
Strengthening the United Nations	46	22
Protecting the interests of American business abroad	43	32
Promoting and defending human rights in other countries	42	44
Helping to improve the standard of living of less developed nations	37	46
Protecting weaker nations against foreign aggression	32	29
Helping to bring a democratic form of government to other nations	30	29

*n.a. = not asked

with both the public and leaders, very few people cited Western Europe as a major foreign policy problem in 1986 except for the 7% of the leaders mentioning NATO. And hardly anyone (fewer than 1% of the public and 1% of the leaders) mentioned any Asian country, a contrast with the 17% of leaders who cited improving relations with mainland China in 1978 and the 6% in 1982.

FOREIGN POLICY GOALS

The American public holds a relatively clear and coherent set of goals for U.S. foreign policy, goals that have remained much the same in each of the four surveys conducted since 1974. Most Americans put a high priority on domestic economic goals, somewhat less on the aims of building military strength and containing communism, and the least emphasis on altruistic aims of helping other countries with their problems. (See ranking of goals in Table II-4.)

The most heavily endorsed goal by far was "protecting the jobs of American workers," cited as very important by 78% of the sample – the same percentage as in the recession year of 1982, and little different from 1974 or 1978. Shortly behind protecting jobs comes "securing adequate supplies of energy" (69%) (also fairly steady over 12 years, despite ebbs and flows during energy crises) and "reducing U.S. trade deficit with foreign countries" (62%), which we included for the first time in 1986 to replace the formerly very popular "keeping up the value of the dollar."

Most altruistic goals won much less support. "Strengthening the United Nations," once a cherished aim of most Americans, was considered very important by only 46%; "promoting and defending human rights in other countries" (a Carter administration priority) by 42%; "helping to improve the standard of living of less developed nations" by 37%; "protecting weaker nations against foreign aggression" by 32%; and "helping to bring a democratic form of government to other nations" (a Reagan administration goal) by a mere 30%. The chief exception to this trend is the strong (63%) endorsement of "combatting world hunger" as a very important goal (up 5% since 1982), presumably reflecting widespread publicity about starvation in Ethiopia and elsewhere. For the most part, however, Americans do not want to get involved in most other countries' problems.

Strategic political and military aims occupy a middle ground. Such goals as "containing communism," "defending our allies' security," and "matching Soviet military power" were called very important by moderate majorities of the public. But the goal of "worldwide arms control" was judged very important by 69% of the public. Support for arms control (up 5% since 1982) was reflected at many different points in our survey.

The leaders in our sample, like the general public, put a relatively low priority on the altruistic goals, especially protecting weak nations against aggression, promoting democratic governments, and strengthening the United Nations. (They were decidedly less enthusiastic about the UN than the public was, a fundamental change from the early postwar period.) The leaders agreed with the public on the great importance of arms control, putting that goal at the very top of the list – with 83% calling it very important. Once again the second highest priority for American leaders was defending our allies (78%) – a level supported in each of our surveys.

In other respects, the leaders differed from the public. They consistently focused less on domestic economic objectives, with 72% calling the assurance of adequate energy supplies very important, but only 43% (far below the public's 78%) saying the same about protecting the jobs of American workers. It is perhaps not surprising that the public, which includes many workers and their families, cared more about jobs. For example, about 80% of the large segment of the public with incomes under $35,000 considered protecting jobs "very important," but a somewhat lower 67% of those with incomes over $50,000 did so.

The leaders picked and chose among strategic aims, expressing less enthusiasm about containing communism (43%) or matching Soviet power (59%), or in "protecting the interests of American business abroad."

RATING GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE

In the light of these foreign policy goals, how did our respondents rate the government's performance? The answer is not very encouraging to the Reagan administration. At the time of our autumn 1986 survey President Reagan himself was very popular, and a slight majority of the public (52%) gave an "excellent" or "good" rating to the administration's handling of "overall foreign policy," as opposed to only 43% "fair" or "poor." When we asked the same question in mid-January 1987, after revelations about the Iran-contra affair, the "excellent" or "good" ratings dropped 22 percentage points, to 30%: a serious loss. But even in November 1986, when the survey turned to more specific topics, the ratings became more negative, with the public not giving a majority of positive ratings for any one of the seven specific areas we asked about. (See Table II-5.)

Table II-5. Evaluation of administration's performance
"How would you rate the Reagan administration's handling of the following problems? Would you say the administration's handling of ________ was excellent, good, fair or poor?"

	Public				Leaders	
	Jan. 1987		Nov. 1986		Nov. 1986	
Problem	**Excellent/ Good**	**Fair/ Poor**	**Excellent/ Good**	**Fair/ Poor**	**Excellent/ Good**	**Fair/ Poor**
Overall foreign policy	30%	67%	52%	43%	47%	53%
Terrorism	**28**	**68**	**44**	**53**	**54**	**46**
Human rights	n.a.*	n.a.	43	52	31	69
Arms control	**n.a.**	**n.a.**	**42**	**50**	**42**	**57**
Middle East	n.a.	n.a.	40	51	32	67
Relations with Soviet Union	**n.a.**	**n.a.**	**38**	**56**	**41**	**58**
Trade policy	n.a.	n.a.	25	61	38	60
Illegal immigration	**n.a.**	**n.a.**	**18**	**72**	**26**	**70**

*n.a. = not asked

The administration fared best with the public on its handling of terrorism, human rights, arms control, and the Middle East. In each of these cases some 40–44% of the public said "excellent" or "good," while 50–53% said "fair" or "poor" in the fall. (By January 1987, however, favorable judgments on handling of terrorism dropped to 28%, with 68% unfavorable.) But on handling relations with the Soviet Union, the balance was 38% positive and 56% negative. And the administration's handling of illegal immigration and of foreign trade was judged as "poor" by substantial numbers of citizens–by 40%, in the case of illegal immigration.

The leaders were more favorable than the public on terrorism (the one area in which a majority actually said "excellent" or "good") and on trade policy and immigration. But leaders were even more critical than the public of the administration's record in human rights and the Middle East.

The Reagan administration won selective praise for its performance on certain foreign policy actions. A majority (59%) rated the U.S. bombing of Libya in 1986 as "excellent" or "good," and a plurality (47%) gave a positive rating to the U.S. invasion and occupation of Grenada in 1983. But the U.S. response to the destruction of Korean flight 007 by Soviet military planes in 1983 was rated "fair" or "poor" by a two-to-one margin. And U.S. efforts to overthrow the leftist government of Nicaragua received an overwhelmingly negative response, 60% to 20%. (See Table II-6.)

The leaders' judgments followed the same pattern almost exactly, when "don't know" responses (less frequent among leaders) are excluded. But the leaders were even more negative in their evaluation of the administration's efforts in Nicaragua, by a 79% to 18% margin, with a majority (52%) rating administration action "poor." The reactions to Grenada and Libya revealed big differences between the administration sample and the other leaders.

EVALUATION

What can one conclude from this? Certainly the public likes success. The quick and successful Libya and Grenada operations, with little loss to U.S. forces, won public approval, whereas the long and unsuccessful effort in Nicaragua did not, even before the revelations of diverted Iranian arms money to the contras. In a number of

Table II-6. Ratings of U.S. government actions

"How would you rate the following actions of the U.S. Governemnt? Would you say ________ was/were excellent, good, fair, or poor?"

	Public		Leaders	
	Excellent/ Good	Fair/ Poor	Excellent/ Good	Fair/ Poor
The U.S. bombing of Libya	59%	33%	57%	42%
The U.S. invasion and occupation of Grenada	47	38	55	44
The U.S. response to the destruction of Korean flight 007 by Soviet military planes	27	58	39	60
U.S. efforts to overthrow the leftist government of Nicaragua	20	60	18	79

Table II-7. The perceived military balance

"At the present time, which nation do you feel is stronger in terms of military power, the United States or the Soviet Union–or do you think they are about equal militarily?"

	Public			Leaders	
	1986	1982	1979*	1986	1982
U.S. stronger	28%	21%	33%	28%	20%
About equal	48	42	26	59	62
USSR stronger	17	29	32	11	15
Don't know	7	8	9	2	3
	100	100	100	100	100

*Gallup survey #135-G

Table II-8. Relationships with the Soviet Union (Percentage in favor of cooperation)

"Relations between the Soviet Union and the United States have been the subject of disagreement for some time. Please tell me if you would favor or oppose the following types of relationships with the Soviet Union."

	Public	Leaders
Favor negotiating arms control agreements	80%	95%
Favor resuming cultural and educational exchanges	78	98
Favor increasing grain sales	57	82
Oppose restricting trade	52	73
Oppose prohibiting exchanges of scientists	53	83
Oppose limiting sales of advanced U.S. computers	33	20
Favor sharing technical information about defending against missile attacks.	23	n.a.*

*n.a. = not asked

places in the 1986 survey the public indicated general approval of covert operations and selective uses of force, but in specific instances there is evidence of strong opposition to application of the "Reagan Doctrine" of undermining leftist regimes, including in Nicaragua.

These 1986 findings are consistent with the public's responses to the different set of situations posed in 1982. In that year, only U.S. handling of the Falkland Islands War (in which the U.S. stayed more or less uninvolved) won substantial approval. The public reacted negatively to administration handling of the Israeli invasion of Lebanon, the fighting between government and rebels in El Salvador, the declaration of martial law in Poland, and the seizure of U.S hostages in Iran—none of which had shown clearly beneficial results. Performance, it seems fair to say, is judged largely by results.

RELATIONS WITH THE USSR

It is clear from the public's assessment of foreign policy problems that relations with the USSR are at the center of U.S. foreign policy. It is also clear from Americans' statements of foreign policy goals that superpower competition wins limited enthusiasm: — arms control and domestic economic concerns are primary. This has important consequences for Americans' policy preferences concerning the Soviet Union.

The perception of Soviet military superiority that so disturbed some members of the public in the early Reagan years had been decisively reversed by 1986. In 1982, 29% thought the USSR was "stronger," While 21% picked the U.S. (Table II-7). But in 1986, 28% found the U.S. stronger and only 17% the Soviets. (In both years just under half the population thought the superpowers were about equal.) Fewer leaders had accepted the Soviet superiority argument, but an even larger plurality saw the U.S. ahead in 1986 than in 1982. In one sense this change represented a triumph for the Reagan administration's arms build-up. But this success may have undermined support for a continuation of that build-up. And the changed perceptions probably also contributed to some increase in the already strong public support for cooperative relationships with the Soviet Union.

Eight specific areas of superpower relationships in 1986 were polled, and a majority of the public favored cooperative action in all but two of them (Table II-8). An overwhelming 81% favored negotiating arms control agreements. Seventy-eight percent (up 8% since 1982) wanted to resume educational and cultural exchanges. Fifty-seven percent (vs. 31% opposed) favored increasing grain sales to the Soviet Union. Fifty-two percent (up 10% since 1982) opposed restricting U.S.-Soviet trade. Fifty-three percent (against 36% previously) opposed prohibiting the exchange of scientists between the U.S. and the Soviet Union. Only on the matters of limiting the sales of advanced U.S. computers to the Soviets (presumably because of the military implications) and sharing technical information about defending against missile attacks (a complex notion that suggest giving away important military secrets) did majorities of the public oppose cooperation.

Foreign policy leaders, with the same exception of computer sales, also favored cooperative relationships and by even larger margins. It is striking that a decade of tense relationship toward the USSR and frequently hostile rhetoric has not significantly diminished the desire for cooperation in a number of important areas.

III. Political Relationships and Commitments Abroad

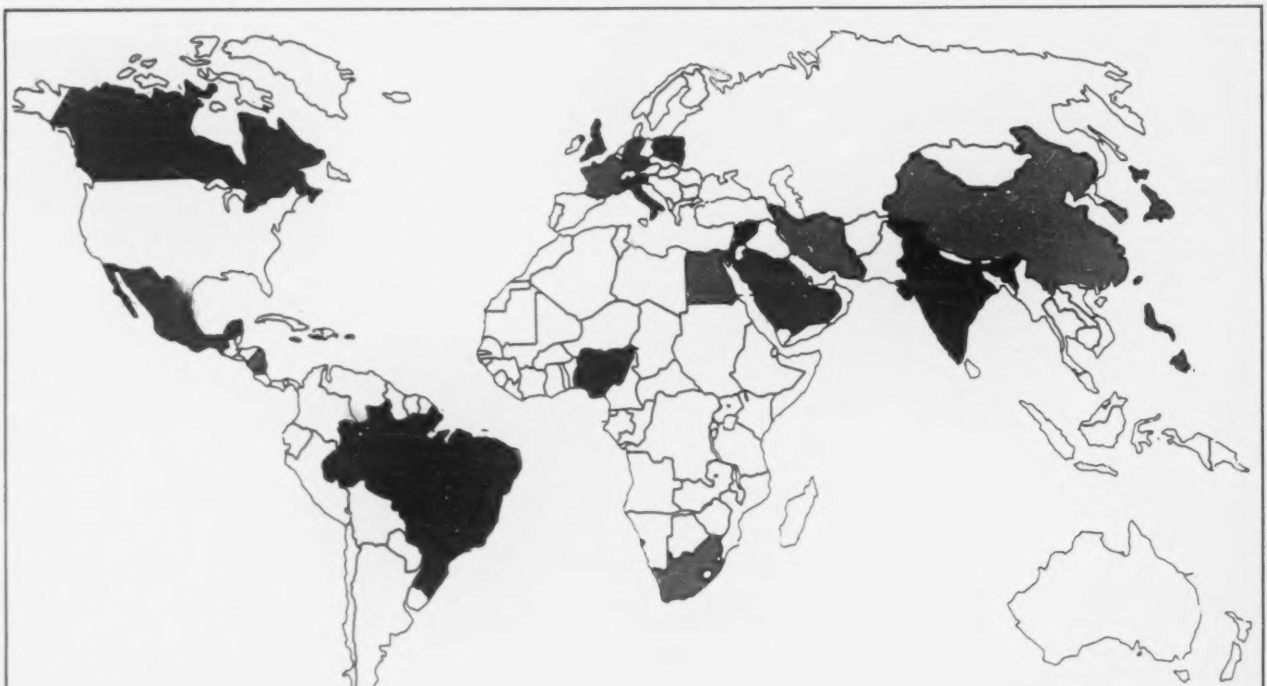
By November 1986 numerous observers commented that the United States had strained its relations with its neighbors, its allies, and its adversaries – whether through insensitivity to its neighbors' needs, failure to consult and honor its allies' interests at Reykjavik, or through hostile rhetoric directed at adversaries. How other nations felt about the United States is not the subject of this survey and analysis. What is clear is that both the American public and leaders were more favorably disposed toward neighbors and allies than before, whether measured by perceived vital interests or warmth of feeling. American preferences and priorities were, the same as in earlier surveys, heavily favoring neighbors and allies.

VITAL INTERESTS

In 1986, as in 1982, both the American public and leaders saw the United States as having vital interests in a variety of countries throughout the world (see Table III-1 and Figure III-1). "Vital interests" are defined as "interests important to the United States for political, economic or security reasons." Also affecting the perceptions of vital interest is the prominence of a country in the public media. For example, the perception of South Africa's vital interest to the U.S. jumped 20% from 1982 to 1986 in the public mind, partly because of the media attention given to events there.

Public respondents were asked to rate a selected list of 23 countries and leaders of 16 countries. Most notable is the continuity and stability reflected in the vital interest rankings of the countries by both the public and the leadership. Top priority was given by both to our neighbors, to our allies, and

FIGURE III-1
PERCEPTIONS OF THE U.S. VITAL INTERESTS —1986 (The Public)



■ **—OVER 70%** Japan Canada Great Britain Saudi Arabia Federal Republic of Germany Israel Mexico The Philippines
■ **—50-70%** Egypt People's Republic of China France Iran Taiwan South Africa South Korea Nicaragua
■ **—37-49%** Brazil Syria Italy
■ **—36% AND LESS** Nigeria India Poland

to Japan. Longtime political and cultural affinity was important, as were economic and strategic interests. Great Britain came out at the top on the public side (compared with third in 1982), followed closely by Canada, Japan, the Federal Republic of Germany, and Saudi Arabia, all at more or less the same level. Among the leaders, the Federal Republic of Germany and Japan once again came out at the very top with 98% declaring a vital interest there. U.S. neighbors Mexico and Canada followed with 96%, again confirming a long trend of rating American's northern and southern neighbors near the top in the vital interest category.

The public ranked Canada second and Mexico seventh – exactly where they were four years ago. Great Britain and the Federal Republic of Germany continue to be considered the most vital of American allies in Europe, both by the public and leaders. Once again, both Germany and Britain came out well ahead of France. One important addition to the list in 1986 was the Philippines, which (with 74% and 81% on the public and leadership sides) ended up in the top ten countries with both groups. The differences in ratings of the most highly rated countries are small; what is of greater significance is that the same countries consistently appear among the top seven, rather than the precise order among them.

Two Middle Eastern countries, Saudi Arabia and Israel, continued to receive high ratings, both on the public side (with 77% and 76%, respectively, and on the leadership side (with 88% and 86%). Given the attention focused on South Africa during the four-year period, it is not surprising that both the public's and the leaders' ranking had gone up substantially. Fifty-eight percent of the public and 63% of the leaders saw a vital interest there, representing an increase of 20% on the public side and 9% on the leaders' side. While the precise motivations for seeing a vital interest there are no doubt varied – economics, security, humanitarian reasons – South Africa is a country whose future is seen as important by many Americans.

The People's Republic of China continues to be represented in the top ten countries on the vital interest chart, but its perceived importance has declined – four points below that of 1982 and ten points below that of 1978. The three countries in the public view that increased most in the 1982-86 period are: South Africa (+20%), South Korea (+15%), and Syria (+11%). In the leaders' view, two of the three are included, with South Korea increasing by 14% and South Africa by 9%; both are countries where security considerations are important for the United States. Among those countries whose importance has been perceived by the public to have diminished since 1982 are Poland (8%) and Egypt (5%). The continued low priority given to Poland is surprising considering the Reagan administration's priority interest in Poland and the continuing attention which that country receives by the American press. Egypt under President Mubarak clearly played a less important role in the world scene than it did four years ago. The Middle East has not been an area where the Reagan administration has taken an active role in making further progress toward accommodation between Israel and the Arab states.

On the leadership side, the country whose perceived importance has decreased most since 1982 is Brazil (–17%). While the Brazilian financial crisis has receded in attention in recent years, the return to democracy there has received widespread favorable attention. Therefore the 17% decline on the part of American leadership is surprising. No such decline occurred on the public side – Brazil remained at the same level as 1982. Although Brazil remains well down the list (18th) on the public's vital interest scale, it ranks in the top ten countries in favorability.

TABLE III-1. Attitude toward America's vital interests around the world— The Public

"Many people believe the United States has a vital interest in certain areas of the world and not in other areas. That is, certain countries of the world are important to the U.S. for political, economic or security reasons. I am going to read a list of countries. For each, tell me whether you feel the U.S. does or does not have a vital interest in that country."

	Does Have Vital Interest			
	1986		1982	
	Public	Leaders	Public	Leaders
Great Britain	83%	94%	80%	97%
Canada	78	96	82	95
Japan	78	98	82	97
Federal Republic of Germany	77	98	76	98
Saudi Arabia	77	88	77	93
Israel	76	86	75	92
Mexico	74	96	74	98
The Philippines	73	81	n.a.*	n.a.
Egypt	61	n.a.	66	90
People's Republic of China	61	89	64	87
Nicaragua	60	63	n.a.	n.a.
South Africa	54	63	38	54
South Korea	58	80	43	66
France	56	82	58	84
Taiwan	53	48	51	44
Iran	50	n.a.	51	60
Syria	48	n.a.	36	46
Brazil	45	63	45	80
Italy	41	n.a.	35	79
India	36	55	30	57
Poland	35	n.a.	43	47
Nigeria	31	n.a.	32	53

*n.a. = not asked

It is not surprising that a larger percentage of the leadership than of the public saw the United States as having a vital interest in each country. The one exception (also true four years ago) was Taiwan, where 53% of the public saw vital interest, but only 48% of the leaders agreed. More important, almost twice as many of the leaders (51%) stated that the United States did not have a vital interest in Taiwan, compared with 28% of the public. Clearly, the decision by successive U.S. governments to recognize the People's Republic of China and to downgrade the importance of Taiwan is more thoroughly reflected in the leaders' attitudes. Taiwan comes out at the bottom of the list of countries rated on the leadership side.

EVALUATION

What is most significant in assessing views on vital interests is the remarkable consistency and continuity shown in all our surveys. In leadership attitudes, for example, there has been no change since 1978 toward the importance of the Federal Republic of Germany (98%, 98%, 98%), Great Britain (94%, 97%, 94%), Japan (99%, 97%, 98%), or France (90%, 84%, 82%). Although the variation is greater on the public side, once again what is most impressive are the similarities: Federal Republic of Germany (69%, 76%, 77%), Great Britain (66%, 80%, 83%), Japan (78%, 82%, 77%), France (54%, 58%, 56%), and Israel (78%, 75%, 76%). Despite the continuing world crises that are well-reported by the media, continuity has persisted among both public and leadership attitudes. There have been no sharp shifts in opinon. With only a few exceptions, vital interests are concentrated in countries that are neighbors and allies. Third World countries (excepting the Western hemisphere) have regularly been rated low.

TABLE III-2. Thermometer Ratings for countries—The Public

"Next I'd like you to rate the same countries on this feeling thermometer. If you feel neutral toward a country, give it a temperature of 50 degrees. If you have a warm feeling toward a country, give it a temperature higher than 50 degrees. If you have a cool feeling toward a country, give it a temperature lower than 50 degrees."

	Mean Temperature (degrees)		
	1986	**1982**	**1978**
Canada	77	74	72
Great Britain	**73**	**68**	**67**
Federal Republic of Germany	62	59	57
Japan	**61**	**53**	**56**
Mexico	59	60	58
Israel	**59**	**55**	**61**
The Philippines	59	n.a.*	n.a.
France	**58**	**60**	**62**
Italy	58	55	56
Brazil	**54**	**54**	**52**
Poland	53	52	50
People's Republic of China	**53**	**47**	**44**
Taiwan	52	49	51
South Korea	**50**	**44**	**48**
Saudi Arabia	50	52	48
Egypt	**49**	**52**	**53**
india	48	48	49
South Africa	**47**	**45**	**46**
Nigeria	46	44	47
Nicaragua	**46**	**n.a.**	**n.a.**
Syria	34	42	n.a.
Soviet Union	**31**	**26**	**34**
Iran	22	28	50

*n.a. = not asked

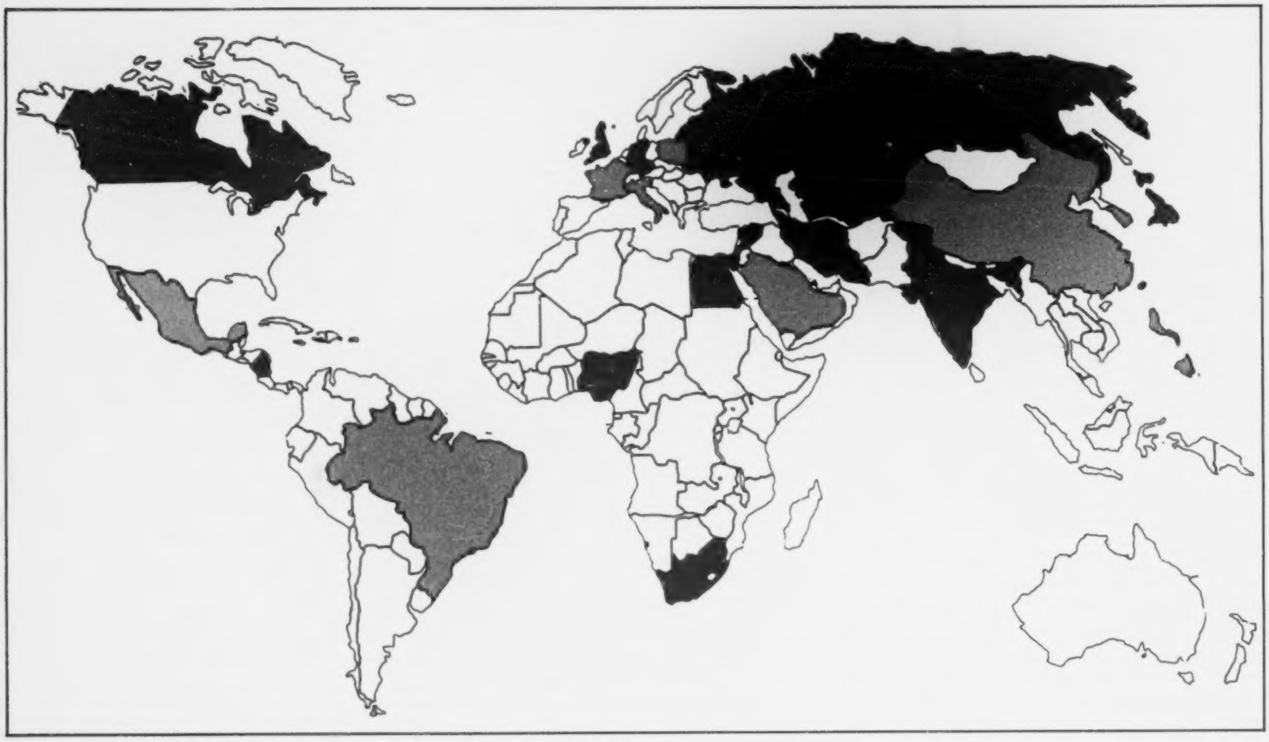
FAVORABILITY TOWARD COUNTRIES

In addition to assessing vital interests, the public was again asked to indicate their degree of "favorability" to 24 countries on a thermometer scale ranging from 0 degrees (very cold or unfavorable) and 100 degrees (very warm or highly favorable). A thermometer rating of 50 was designated as neutral. (See table III-2.)

As in 1982, NATO allies and neighbors once again came out at the top in favorability, starting with Canada, Great Britain, and the Federal Republic of Germany. This represents an increase in favorability for the Federal Republic compared with four years ago (fifth place) and makes the favorability rating comparable to its vital interest rating (or fourth, following Great Britain, Canada and Japan). The eight-degree increase in favorability for Japan (which ranked ninth in 1982) represents one of the largest shifts over the four-year period. Given the continuing massive trade deficit with Japan and the barrage of criticism of Japan by Congressional, labor and industrial leaders, it is remarkable that the American public views Japan in a more favorable light.

France was another country to change in ranking. It dropped from third in 1982 to eighth in 1986. The difference in mean temperature from year to year is less than the difference in ranking, and the change in rank does not necessarily mean any massive shift in attitude. (For France, the change in temperature was only two degrees.) The uncertainty about governmental stability in France caused by the cohabitation of a center-right prime minister and cabinet and a Socialist president and the refusal by the French government to permit overflight by U.S. military planes at the time of the Libyan attack in 1986 undoubtedly affected public attitudes toward France. Other close allies or neighbors of the United States continue to rank high, with Mexico (59 degrees) once again in fifth place, just slightly behind last year (third place with 60 degrees). Israel's ranking remained the same: fifth place both years.

FIGURE III-2
FAVORABILITY 1986 (The Public)



■ **—60° AND WARMER** Canada Great Britain Federal Republic of Germany Japan

▨ **—50-59°** Israel Italy Brazil Poland Saudi Arabia South Korea Taiwan People's Republic of China France Mexico The Philippines

■ **—40-49°** India South Africa Nigeria Nicaragua Egypt

■ **—UNDER 35°** Iran Soviet Union Syria

At the bottom of scale, Iran replaced the Soviet Union as the country with the lowest favorability rating (22 degrees), followed by the Soviet Union with 31 degrees. Iran's 22-degree rating was well below the 50-degree rating in 1978, indicating a long-term drop in favorable attitudes among the American public toward Iran since the fall of the Shah and the coming to power of the Ayatollah Khomeini and continuing after the end of the 1980 hostage crisis. Given this sharply negative public attitude toward Iran, it is not surprising that President Reagan's efforts to reach an agreement with the Iran government to exchange hostages for arms provoked such a sharply negative response among the American people and their leaders. Countries associated with terrorism – whether Iran or Libya – fared badly throughout the survey.

Another notable development was the high favorability rating accorded to the Philippines, a new entry on the list. With a 59-degree rating, the Philippines came out at the same level as Mexico and Israel, and just slightly ahead of France and Italy. This no doubt reflected the long-standing ties between the United States and the Philippines, but also the saturation of coverage by the American media of the change in government and the widespread favorable publicity given to its new leader, President Corazon Aquino, who led one of the few successful democratic revolutions in the Third World.

FAVORABILITY TOWARD WORLD LEADERS

When the public was asked to give a favorability rating to various international figures (see Table III-3), American and allied figures ranked at the top together with selected religious leaders. A "thermometer" was used to measure the ratings ranging from 0° to 100° in terms of warmth with 50° being neutral. Once again, Pope John Paul II topped the list with a 71° average rating. British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and U.S. President Ronald Reagan came in second, tied at 68 degrees. This represented an increase of 7° on the thermometer for Margaret Thatcher and a 14° increase for President Reagan. (This evaluation is based on data collected from October 28-November 12, 1986, prior to the impact of the Iran crisis on public opinion.)

The most impressive newcomer on the list, Philippine President Corazon Aquino, came in fourth with a 62-degree rating, reflecting the strong postive image she projected in the American media during the year after the fall of President Marcos. Once again former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger remained in the top five, with his 60-degree rating representing an increase of 6% over 1982, ranking just above Secretary of State George Shultz, whose 59-degree rating, represents an increase of 4 degrees over 1982. Henry Kissinger's increased favorability to fifth place in 1986 is

TABLE III-3. Thermometer ratings for personalities — The Public

"Now I would like you to rate some American and foreign leaders on this thermometer scale. What temperature would you give to:"

	Mean Temperature (0-100 degrees)
Pope John Paul II	71
British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher	68
President Ronald Reagan	68
Philippines President Corazon Aquino	62
Former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger	60
Secretary of State George Shultz	59
Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger	57
Former President Jimmy Carter	56
Archibishop Desmond Tutu of South Africa	53
West German Chancellor Helmut Kohl	52
Japanese Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone	50
Chinese Party Chairman Deng Xiaoping	46
Former President Richard Nixon	45
Soviet General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev	42
Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega	29
Cuban President Fidel Castro	20
Libyan Leader Muammar Ghadafi	11

remarkable. He had been out of office almost 10 years, yet he continued to be ranked higher than most world leaders on the list. Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger came in next, with 57 degrees.

Among foreign leaders, South Africa's Archibishop Desmond Tutu (53 degrees) followed President Aquino. He was followed by West German Chancellor Helmut Kohl (52 degrees), Japanese Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone (50 degrees) and Chinese Party Chairman Deng Xiaoping (46 degrees). Libyan leader Muammar Ghadafi was last (11 degrees) and Cuban President Fidel Castro second to last with 20 degrees. Soviet General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev was well down the list in ranking, but his 42-degree temperature represented an 11-degree increase over his predecessor in office in 1982, Premier Leonid Brezhnev, who came out at 31 degrees.

In 1982 President Reagan and former President Carter ended up with the same favorability rating (54 degrees). Four years later, President Reagan's rating of 68 degrees was 12 points higher than that of former President Carter. Data collected by the Gallup Organization on December 8 after the Iran arms crisis of late autumn 1986 indicated a sharp drop in Reagan's job performance rating (approval dropped from 63% on October 24 to 47% on December 4-5; disapproval increased from 29% to 44% during the same period). Yet President Reagan's approval rating as an individual declined only slightly during the same period, from 80% to 75%.

Leaders associated with terrorism continue to fare poorly with the American public. So do leaders of communist countries closely associated with the Soviet Union. Libyan leader Muammar Ghadafi replaced the Ayatollah Khomeini of Iran at the bottom of the list. Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega (29 degrees) had a rating below that of the country itself, which was given a 46-degree rating, well above that of the Soviet Union and Iran.

THREAT OF COMMUNISM

Despite consistent emphasis by the Reagan administration for six years on the threat of communism, no increased concern was reflected in either public or leadership reaction. To test the American public's views of the threat of a communist government's coming to power in different countries, the question was asked: "If the Communist Party came to power through peaceful elections" in each of six countries (Mexico, Saudi Arabia, the Philippines, France, El Salvador and South Africa), "what kind of a threat would that represent: a great threat; somewhat of a threat; not very much of a threat; or no

TABLE III-4. Level of threat posed by elected communist government in various countries – 1986

"I am going to read a list of countries. For each, tell me how much of a threat it would be to the U.S. if the communists came to power. What if the Communist Party came to power through peaceful elections in ________ ? Do you think this would be a great threat to the U.S., somewhat of a threat to the U.S., not very much of a threat to the U.S., or no threat at all to the U.S.?"

	Great Threat		Somewhat of A Threat		Not Very Much		No Threat At All		Don't Know	
	Public	Leaders	Public	Leaders	Public	Leaders	Public	Leaders	Public	Leaders
Mexico	62%	74%	18%	20%	10%	4%	5%	2%	5%	n.a.*
Saudi Arabia	39	51	35	38	12	5	5	5	8	1
The Philippines	37	28	35	55	15	13	6	3	7	n.a.
France	30	41	38	38	18	16	8	5	6	n.a.
El Salvador	27	16	43	46	17	32	4	6	8	n.a.
South Africa	21	20	40	47	22	21	9	12	9	n.a.

*n.a. = not asked

threat at all to the United States?" (See Table III-4.) A majority of the public regards a communist takeover, even if by peaceful democratic means, as at least "somewhat of a threat" in all of these countries, but only in the case of neighbor Mexico do a majority (62%) say that a communist government would be a "great threat to the U.S." This figures drops to 39% in the case of Saudi Arabia, where concern is diminished by the lowered preoccupation with access to Saudi Arabian oil. It is 37% in the case of the Philippines and 30% in the case of France (where Communists did participate in the government during the first three years–1981-84–of the Mitterrand government). If the figures for "great threat" and "somewhat of a great threat" are combined, concern about communist expansion looks more substantial: 80% in the case of Mexico, 74% for Saudi Arabia, 72% for the Philippines, and 68% for France.

In most of the countries examined, American leaders are more likely to see a communist government as a "great threat to U.S. interests" than the public. Among leaders, 74% saw a great threat in the case of Mexico, 51% for Saudi Arabia, and 41% for France. If one combines the categories of "great threat" and "somewhat of a threat" for American leaders, Mexico records 94%; Saudi Arabia 89%; and France 79%. American leaders registered little change in attitude in the four years between 1982 and 1986. Among the public, moreover, no change occurred from 1982 to 1986 in attitudes toward the degree of threat represented by a communist government's coming to power, except in the case of Saudi Arabia (a drop from 49% to 39% occurred.) The same 10% decline was reflected in the leadership sample.

This year's results are consistent with those of the past decade. Less than half of the public and of American leaders see a "great threat" if a Communist government comes to power in most countries other than our most immediate neighbors. On the other hand, over two-thirds of the public and leaders continue to see at least "somewhat of a threat" in all of the countries sampled. The results over a decade continue to show that fear of communist governments per se carries a lesser degree of urgency than an attempt by the Soviet Union to extend its influence over a specific country.

TABLE III-5. Attitudes toward NATO

"Some people feel that NATO, the military organization of Western Europe and the United States, has outlived its usefulness, and that the United States should withdraw militarily from NATO. Others say that NATO has discouraged the Russians from trying a military takeover in Western Europe. Do you feel we should increase our commitment to NATO, keep our commitment what it is now, decrease our commitment but still remain in NATO, or withdraw from NATO entirely?"

	1986		1982		1978	
	Public	**Leaders**	**Public**	**Leaders**	**Public**	**Leaders**
Increase Commitment	8%	8%	9%	7%	9%	21%
Keep commitment what it is	**62**	**77**	**58**	**79**	**58**	**65**
Decrease commitment	11	13	11	12	9	12
Withdraw entirely	**5**	**1**	**4**	**1**	**4**	**1**
Not sure	14	1	18	1	20	1

SUPPORT FOR NATO

The results of our study show once again that our longtime regional security alliance, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, continues to enjoy strong support among the public and leaders (See Table III-5.) Among the public, 8% believe that we should increase the commitment, 62% would keep it what it is, and 11% would decrease the commitment, (little different from 1982). Eighty-five percent of the leaders want to either increase the commitment or keep it the same level (no change from four years ago). The last recent substantial change occurred between 1978 and 1982, a period marked by sharp increase at both levels in the support for NATO. The result is consistent with others throughout the report; they show a continued priority on the part of the American public and leaders for the NATO relationship with West European countries.

ATTITUDES TOWARD TROOPS IN WESTERN EUROPE

A number of commentators on both sides of the Atlantic have questioned American leadership attitudes toward a continued strong military presence in Europe. To test sentiment at the leadership level, we asked our sample a question that would characterize their attitude toward withdrawing troops: "leave American troops in Europe for the time being and preserve the American nuclear guarantee for Western Europe?"; or "withdraw American troops over the next five years and let the Europeans provide their own nuclear and conventional defense?" (as indicated in Table III-6). Eighty-two percent of American leaders favored the first alternative (leave American troops in Europe for the time being) and 16% favored the second (withdraw American troops over the next five years). To further test leadership attitudes, we asked a follow-up question of those who favored withdrawing troops over the next five years: "Would you still favor this if West Germany were to participate in the nuclear defense of Western Europe?" Of the group of 16% who favored withdrawing American troops over the next five years, the response was the following: 14% indicated that they would go ahead regardless of German participation in nuclear defense; 1% said they would not; and 1% said "don't know."

Although American leaders are often critical of individual European actions and freely debate various alternatives to current security arrangements in Europe, there remains a clear consensus that the U.S. should not withdraw militarily from Europe. Looking more closely at leadership attitudes on this question, 96% of the Congressional sample chose the first alternative (leave American troops in Europe for the time being), ten points higher than the administration sample.

TABLE III-6. Attitude toward troops in Western Europe—Leaders, 1986

"Some Americans favor bringing our troops home soon from Western Europe. Some Europeans think that if American troops go home, Europe will have to develop its own nuclear and conventional defense. Which of the following alternatives comes closer to your view:"

Attitude Toward Withdrawing Troops	
Leave American troops in Europe for the time being and preserve the American nuclear guarantee for Western Europe	82%
Withdraw American troops over the next five years and let the Europeans provide their own nuclear and conventional defense	16
Don't know	2
(If favor withdrawing troops:) *Would you still favor this if West Germany were to participate in the nuclear defense of Western Europe?*	
Attitude If West German Participation	
Yes	14%
No	1
Don't know	1

PRIORITY TOWARD EUROPE AND ASIA

Recognizing the considerable discussion in recent years about the alleged shift in leadership priorities away from Europe and toward Asia, we added some questions designed to further test leaders' attitudes on this subject. We asked the question: "Some Europeans are worried that both American popular attention and leadership attention are shifting away from Europe to Asia. Which area do you think is more important to the United States, Europe or Asia?" Forty-six percent said Europe was more important, 18% that Asia was more important, and 34% spontaneously replied that Europe and Asia are equally important. The results show that although Europe clearly continues to command the priority, many American leaders (52%) believe that both Europe and Asia are important. These results can be read in various ways: on the one hand, two and a half times as many leaders gave priority to Europe as gave priority to Asia. On the other hand, 52% of the sample believe that Asia is as important as Europe.

To probe leadership attitudes further, we posed questions about geographic preferences for study abroad and foreign language training preferences. Tables III-7 and III-8 shows the results on both questions. As the Table indicates, Europe continues to be the overwhelming favorite (69%) as an area for post-graduate study, with Asia a distant second (15%). In the response, the Congressional sample reflects the leadership average of 69% favoring Europe, while the administration figure was only 45% for Europe and 36% for Asia. There is further evidence elsewhere in our report that administration leaders are less oriented toward Europe than Congressional representatives–and less so than the American leadership as a whole. On the question on language preference, Spanish (which is both a European and an American language) came in first with 34%, followed by French (22%) and Japanese (16%). Since Spanish is the second most prevalent language spoken in the United States, the result is not surprising.

The responses to these questions designed to measure leadership attitudes toward geographical areas suggest that their interests and priorities have broadened as the United States has become involved in other areas of the world. Although Europe clearly remains at the top of the leaders' list of priorities on any scale, there is a strong interest in Asia and Latin America as well.

U.S. RELATIONS WITH CUBA

Americans continue to display a strong distaste for the current regime in Cuba and its leaders. At the same time they support the idea of re-establishing diplomatic relations with Cuba. Despite the Reagan administration's continued policy of hostility toward the Castro regime and the absence of any visible progress in the relationship, support for re-establishing diplomatic relations with Cuba increased slightly between 1982 and 1986 among the public. Fourteen percent of the American public were "very strongly in favor" of re-establishing diplomatic and economic relations and exchanging ambassadors with Cuba, and 39% were "fairly strongly in favor," an increase of five percentage points over 1982. Only seventeen percent were "fairly strongly opposed" (a drop of 2%), and an unchanged 18% were "very strongly opposed." Support for détente with adversaries is evident here. As in the case of the Soviet Union, continued hostility toward a country is combined with a willingness to take positive action to improve relations.

TABLE III-7. Attitude toward foreign cultures—Leaders, 1986

"If you had a son or daughter and were sending him or her abroad for post-graduate study, where would you most likely urge him or her to go?"

Geographic Area Preferred For Post-Graduate Study	
Europe	70%
Asia	15
South America	3
Africa	3
Middle East	3
Don't know	7

TABLE III-8. Attitude toward foreign cultures—Leaders, 1986

"If you had a son or daughter who was required to become fluent in a foreign language, which one of the following would you advise him or her to choose?"

Foreign Language Chosen	
Spanish	34%
French	22
Japanese	16
Chinese	12
Russian	10
German	3
Don't know	4

ATTITUDES TOWARD COVERT INTELLIGENCE ACTIVITY

Before the controversy erupted over covert activity by members of the National Security Council staff in regard to Iran and Nicaragua, a shift had already occurred in American public and leadership attitudes toward covert activity undertaken by the Central Intelligence Agency. In response to a key question—"In general, do you feel the CIA should or should not work secretly inside other countries to try to weaken or overthrow governments unfriendly to the U.S.?"—a large shift occurred among leaders and a smaller one among the public, all in the direction of greater support for the covert role of the Central Intelligence Agency. A 13-point swing occurred in leadership opinion; 48% (compared with 35% in 1982) said the United States should work secretly inside other countries, 45% (a 13% drop from 58% in 1982) said we should not. Among the public, 50% favored the CIA working secretly in other countries in 1986 (compared with 43% in 1982) and 38% were opposed (compared with 37% in 1982). Both the public and the leaders gave stronger support to the Reagan administration's priority of covert activities in certain parts of the world. Yet this support for a general enlargement of current activities does not translate into support for such efforts in specific countries—in Nicaragua, for example.

Not surprisingly, attitudes toward the role of the CIA vary substantially among different categories of the public. Looking more closely at the public sample, we found that those with a high political involvement in foreign affairs were more opposed to CIA involvement (50%) than the average American (38%). More of those Americans who believe that the United States plays a more important role in the world today favored CIA involvement (55%), while only 43% opposed it; among those Americans who believe the United States plays a less important role in the world today, only 43% favored an active role by the CIA and 49% opposed it. More Republicans (59%) favored an active role than Democrats (45%), and more Democrats were opposed to an active role (42%) than Republicans (31%).

We found no significant differences in response among income levels, but did find a substantial difference in the attitudes of men and women on this subject. Among men, 57% favored an active role by the CIA and 34% were opposed to it. Among women, 42% favored an active role by the CIA and 42% were opposed to it.

SENTIMENTS ABOUT THE MIDDLE EAST

The study indicates an overall decline in the importance of the Middle East in shaping American thinking about foreign policy issues over the four-year period 1982-86. Also, some significant changes occurred in attitudes toward individual countries within the area. One example is Israel. After a sharp drop in favorability toward Israel from 1978 to 1982, largely because of the Israeli invasion of Lebanon during summer 1982, a substantial favorable shift occurred between 1982 and 1986. When asked the question "In the Middle East situation, are your sympathies more with Israel or more with the Arab nations?", 61% of Americans indicated their sympathies were more with Israel, an increase of 13% over 1982. Ten percent of those responding said that their sympathies were more in sympathy with the Arab nations, a drop of seven points from 1982 and a large percent (29%) said "don't know."

An almost identical shift occurred on the part of American leaders. Sixty-one percent said their sympathies were more with Israel (compared with 51% in 1982), and only 12% (compared with 19% in 1982) said their sympathies were more with the Arab nations. Yet at the same time that these trends favorable to Israel were under way, only 32% of the American public would favor the use of American military troops if Arab forces invaded Israel.

When a more specific question was asked in 1986 about President Reagan's plan for no further Israeli settlements on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, and for a homeland for the Palestinians in these territories, a less pro-Israel response was given – one relatively unchanged from 1982. Among the public, 45% favored President Reagan's plan, 21% opposed it, and a substantial 34% indicated "don't know."

The pattern of the response to these specific questions confirms a strong continued favorable attitude by the American public and its leaders toward Israel, substantially more favorable than four years ago. The reasons for this, no doubt, include the fading from memory of the 1982 invasion of Lebanon by Israel and the relative decline in the importance of oil from the Arab countries in the Middle East. Likewise the increasing concern with terrorism which has been identified with the Middle East has strengthened favorable attitudes toward Israel. Follow-up sampling of opinion in mid-January 1987 after the Iran crisis revealed diminished support for military aid and arms sales to Israel.

IV. U.S. Economic Involvement

The end of the inflation and recession crises of the late 1970s and early 1980s have had a striking effect on the thinking of the American people concerning the domestic economy and foreign relations. As indicated earlier, the proportion of Americans who saw domestic economic issues – and especially unemployment – as the dominant problem facing the country has declined precipitously; in 1986 those who were mainly concerned about unemployment were matched in number by those who were mainly concerned about drug abuse and war/peace issues. Similarly, while a majority of Americans continued to view foreign economic policy through lenses of self-interest, the degree to which Americans perceived the interdependence of the U.S. economy and foreign policy has substantially declined since 1982.

FOCUS ON THE U.S. ECONOMY

When asked about a series of foreign – domestic connections, a majority of Americans continued to see foreign policy as having a major impact on the U.S. economy generally, on gasoline prices, on the value of the dollar abroad, and on unemployment at home (see Table IV-1). What is striking, however, is the sharp drop over the four years in the percentage of the population who see these links – a drop of between 10% and 13%. In 1982 we drew particular attention to the increase in the perceived link between foreign policy and domestic unemployment, a link we presumed to work through export markets for American goods and foreign competition for the U.S. market. While that competition continues more or less unabated, 10% *fewer* Americans see a major impact of foreign policy upon domestic unemployment. We have to conclude that this drop reflects the declining salience of

Table IV-1. Impact of foreign policy on the U.S. economy

"How important an impact do you think U.S. foreign policy has on the following: a major impact, a minor impact, or no impact at all?"

	1986		1982		1978		1974	Change in % points 1982-86	
	Public	**Leaders**	**Public**	**Leaders**	**Public**	**Leaders**	**Public***	**Public**	**Leaders**
Our overall economy at home Major impact	62%	68%	72%	78%	72%	83%	76%	−10	−10
Gasoline prices at home **Major impact**	**69**	**49**	**81**	**61**	**85**	**77**	**87**	**−12**	**−12**
The value of the dollar abroad Major impact	62	67	72	60	82	76	78	−10	+7
Unemployment at home **Major impact**	**56**	**50**	**66**	**48**	**51**	**41**	**60**	**−10**	**+2**
Food prices at home Major impact	47	27	60	38	64	39	76	−13	−11

*No data for leaders for 1974.

Table IV-2. Tariffs and trade restrictions

"It has been argued that if all countries would eliminate their tariffs and restrictions on imported goods, the costs of goods would go down for everyone. Others have said that such tariffs and restrictions are necessary to protect certain manufacturing jobs in certain industries from the competition of less expensive imports ... Generally, would you say you sympathize more with those who want to eliminate tariffs or those who think such tariffs are necessary?"

	1986		1982		1978	
	Public	**Leaders**	**Public**	**Leaders**	**Public**	**Leaders**
Eliminate tariffs	28%	66%	22%	67%	22%	75%
Tariffs are necessary	**53**	**29**	**57**	**28**	**57**	**23**
Don't know	19	5	21	5	21	2

unemployment, rather than a concern about the state of international markets.

There is other evidence in this survey of the possibly diminished degree to which people define their main foreign policy objectives in terms of these foreign-domestic connections. Protecting the jobs of American workers continued to be seen as a very important goal of foreign policy by more Americans (78%) than cited other leading goals; but the goal of arms control now matches the securing of adequate supplies of energy (69% each), and combatting world hunger (63%) matches reducing our trade deficit (62%), a new goal on the list.

Despite the oil glut of 1986, concern about *energy supplies* remained high. Saudi Arabia, with its abundant oil reserves, is still perceived as one of the top five countries of vital interest to the U.S. – tied in the public's perception with West Germany and Japan. While the proportion of Americans who thought it would be a "great threat" to the U.S. if Communists came to power in Saudi Arabia through peaceful elections declined from 49% to 39% since the last survey, those who still felt that way outnumbered those with a comparable concern about France (30%) or El Salvador (27%). And despite a strong distaste for military involvement, more than a third of the public (36%) favored the use of troops if "the Arabs cut off all oil shipments to the U.S." Twenty-six percent of the public would even send troops in the event of an invasion of Saudi Arabia by Iran.

The blurring of the focus on the U.S. economy is also evident in a measurable decline in support for protectionist measures (despite the importance attached to reducing our trade deficit) and in slightly increased support for economic aid to other nations.

TARIFFS AND TRADE

In view of the apparent increase in support for protectionism in political circles in the U.S., the movement on this issue in the two samples is of special interest. The leadership sample continued to express strong support for free trade, long a keystone of internationalist attitudes. Two-thirds – practically the same as four years ago – favored all countries' eliminating their tariffs and other restrictions on imported goods, and only 29% called tariffs necessary (see Table IV-2). The businessmen in this sample endorsed the elimination of tariffs by 71%, whereas labor leaders were the most protectionist, with 76% believing that tariffs are necessary.

Among the general public, sentiment continues to be the reverse of the leaders: 53% thought tariffs and trade restrictions necessary, and 28% favored eliminating them. These figures confirm the general level of public support for tariffs that has been found in national surveys for the past decade. But a closer look suggests something else as well: the gap between the public's views on this issue and the leadership views is closing, as the public keeps moving toward the "free trade" position of the leadership group. The gap between the people in the two samples who favor eliminating tariffs has narrowed by 15 percentage points over the 8-year period, while the gap between those in the two samples who believe tariffs are necessary closed by 10 percentage points.

It must be acknowledged that the gap remains large; but that should not obscure the significance of the movement that is narrowing it. While this movement may appear to be in line with the overall decline in concern about economic issues since the last survey, the shift was taking place even while concern for economic issues was still very high – and it continued even as the political leadership in the country appeared to be *increasingly* responsive to protectionist sentiment. Oddly enough, however, the college educated portion of the public, which has traditionally been in favor of trade liberalization, was more likely than groups with lesser education to believe that tariffs are necessary.

There continue to be few strategic reasons to explain the degree of protection that is favored by the general public. In 1982, 57% of the sample were opposed to an embargo on grain sales to the Soviet Union. In 1986, 57% were in favor of expanding grain sales to the Soviets. (The question was asked differently, because the grain embargo had faded as a policy issue.) The proportion of the public who favor restrictions on U.S. – Soviet trade has declined since 1982, from 47% to 37%, while those who would limit the sale of advanced U.S. computers to the Soviets is barely down, from 59% to 57%.

The sample of leaders overwhelmingly favors expanding grain sales to the Soviets (82%), and they oppose restricting Soviet trade generally (73%), although they continue to favor limiting the sale of computers (78%). There has been little change on these issues since the 1982 survey.

ECONOMIC AID

There is no great support among the American people for the principle of foreign aid. Most Americans (63%) consider "combatting world hunger" a very important foreign policy goal; such humanitarian feelings are evident in many surveys, which invariably show generous public responses to earthquakes, floods, famines, and other natural disasters abroad. Yet Americans as a whole put much less emphasis on the more far-reaching and difficult goal of improving the standard

Table IV-3. Economic aid to other nations

"On the whole, do you favor or oppose our giving economic aid to other nations for purposes of economic development and technical assistance?"

	1986		1982		1978		1974
	Public	Leaders	Public	Leaders	Public	Leaders	Public
In favor	53%	91%	50%	94%	46%	90%	52%
"I am going to read a list of present federal government programs. For each, I'd like you to tell me whether you feel it should be expanded, cut back or keep about the same."							
In favor of expanding economic aid	11	n.a.*	8	n.a.	11	n.a.	10
In favor of keeping economic aid the same	35	n.a.	31	n.a.	31	n.a.	28
"Some people say that this country should give economic and military aid to rebel groups fighting their communist-supported governments within countries like Nicaragua, Angola and Afghanistan. Which of these statements... comes closest to your views?"							
In favor of giving economic and military aid	22	46	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
In favor of giving economic but not military aid	27	22	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
In favor of giving no aid	42	20	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Think that helping to improve the standard of living of less developed nations is a very important foreign policy goal for the U.S.	37	46	35	55	35	64	39
Think that combatting world hunger is a very important foreign policy goal for the U.S.	63	61	58	64	59	67	61
"Now I'm going to ask you some questions about how the U.S. should handle the problem of illegal drugs like heroin and cocaine coming into the U.S. from other countries... Should the U.S. give other countries foreign aid to help their farmers grow different crops and not depend on illegal drugs for their income?"							
In favor	60	79	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
"A number of developing countries, such as Mexico and Brazil, owe large amounts of money to American banks. If these countries were unable to repay these loans, some U.S. banks would be in trouble. Would you favor or oppose U.S. government guaranteeing repayment of these loans?"							
In favor	31	27	n.a.	38	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.

*n.a. = not asked

of living in less developed nations: since 1978 little more than one-third have considered that a very important goal. Third World countries are less likely than others to be seen as being of a vital interest to the U.S., and their thermometer ratings tend to be lower as well. (See Chapter III.)

This ambivalence between humanitarian and political goals is more clear when the issue involves spending money. A bare majority of Americans (53%) favored our giving economic aid to other nations for purposes of economic development and technical assistance—a small but steady increase since 1978 (see Table IV-3). But in the context of a varied list of government programs, more people (48%) wanted to *cut back* on spending for economic assistance than wanted to keep such spending at the same (35%) or higher (11%) level. On the other hand, there has been a substantial drop in the number of people who have spontaneously mentioned the need to reduce foreign aid as one of the "biggest foreign policy problems" facing the U.S. (from 18% in 1978 to 16% in 1982 and to 9% in 1986).

Advocates of economic aid among the public were concentrated in the groups most traditionally associated with internationalism: the college educated (68% in favor), those who are most attentive to foreign news (62% in favor), people in business and professional occupations (65% in favor), and those who have traveled abroad (59% in favor).

We have noted in prior years that opposition to foreign aid, whether or not it reflects motives of economic self-interest, cuts a wide and deep swath in American society. Reluctance to give such aid does not flow simply from adverse economic conditions; resistance to aid has persisted practically throughout the decades in which polls have been taken, except in times of war. Questions that were asked in prior surveys but which were not asked in 1986 make it clear that resistance to foreign aid rests heavily on a pervasive skepticism about what aid can actually accomplish abroad, and about what it does for us at home.

Further clues to the motives (and the fears) of Americans with respect to aid are contained in questions that were new to the survey in 1986 (see Table IV-3). A good majority (60%) of the public was supportive of foreign aid if it would help farmers in

Table IV-4. Responses to the situation in South Africa

"Which of these statements ... comes closest to your view of how the United States should respond to the situation in South Africa?"

	1986	
	Public	**Leaders**
We should support the South African government	8%	3%
We should take no position	23	14
We should impose limited economic sanctions if the South African government does not dismantle its apartheid system.	28	46
We should ban all trade with or investment in South Africa if the South African government does not dismantle its apartheid system.	29	33
Don't know	12	4

such countries to stop growing illegal drugs and to grow different crops instead. On the other hand, there is no comparable level of support for economic, or economic *and* military, aid to rebel groups who are fighting their communist-supported governments within countries like Nicaragua, Angola, and Afghanistan. Despite the centrality of such aid to the Reagan administration, those who support either economic or military aid to such rebel groups (49%) do not greatly outnumber those who favor giving no aid at all to such groups (42%).

The foreign policy leadership sample continues to favor economic aid for the general purpose of economic development by a lopsided majority: since 1978 over 90% of this group have indicated their support. But on other dimensions of the aid question, a major and negative change appears to have been under way in leadership attitudes. The proportion of leaders who endorse, as a very important foreign policy goal for the U.S., "helping to improve the standard of living of less developed nations" has dropped below 50% for the first time in these Council surveys. In 1978, 64% of the sample of leaders endorsed this goal; in 1982, 55%; and in 1986, only 46% (see Table IV-3). There is a smaller but comparable progression that is visible in the decline of leadership support for "combatting world hunger" as a very important foreign policy goal (from 67% in 1978 to 61% in 1986).

There has also been a decline of 11% in leadership support over the four years for the U.S. government's guaranteeing the repayment of developing-country loans to American banks; in 1986 there was more support for that proposition among the general public than in the leadership group. On the two new "aid" questions in this survey, however, the leaders took a more pro-aid position than the general public; a large majority of the leaders (79%) support foreign aid to help farmers shift from drug crops to other crops, and 46% supported economic and military aid (22% economic only) to rebel groups fighting their communist-supported governments. Prior to the Iran-contra affair, at least, close to a majority of the leadership group was on the side of the Reagan administration on this aspect of the Nicaraguan issue.

ECONOMIC SANCTIONS

In view of the changes taking place in South Africa, and the debate in the United States on appropriate policy toward that country, we asked both the public and the leaders how they thought the U.S. should respond to the situation in South Africa. The results are given in Table IV-4.

Clearly, there is no significant support whatever for the South African government among either group (although what small support there is *increases* as educational levels *decrease*). There was virtually identical support among the public for limited economic sanctions – President Reagan's policy – and for more extreme economic measures if the apartheid system is not dismantled. The leaders, however, were more supportive of the President's position on limited sanctions. If we combine support for the two types of economic pressures, we find that 57% of the public, and 79% of the leadership group, favored economic sanctions of some sort to help end apartheid in South Africa.

AID FOR MILITARY PURPOSES

The public has little sympathy for military assistance to other countries. Only one-third of the respondents favored giving military aid, and 37% supported the government's selling military equipment to others (see Table IV-5). These proportions have been in the same range since 1978. One finds in these figures some indication of why the Reagan administration's actions regarding Iran are so unpopular, for the administration sold military equipment to one country (and an unpopular country at that) and then may have used some of the proceeds to *give* military assistance to another. The leaders, on the other hand, who have always been in favor of both giving and selling military equipment, were substantially more supportive of giving military aid to other nations in 1986 than in earlier surveys (up 14% since 1982, from 59% to 73%).

When asked how they felt about expanding, cutting back, or maintaining the level of expenditure on a series of government programs, almost no one wanted to expand military aid to other nations. One-third (27%) of the public favored maintaining the current levels of military assistance and two-thirds (62%) decreasing it. There has been no important change in these figures since 1978, despite the increase in the level of military investment and assistance by the Reagan administration since 1981.

This aversion to military assistance is sustained for specific aid proposals. Nearly three-quarters of the public (72%) felt that U.S. military aid to Central America is likely to lead to U.S. military involvement in that area – a sentiment shared by only 50% of the leadership sample. Similarly, 70% of the public favored either giving no aid or economic aid only but no mili-

Table IV-5. Military aid and arms sales

	Jan. 1987	1986		1982		1978		1974
	Public	**Public**	**Leaders**	**Public**	**Leaders**	**Public**	**Leaders**	**Public**
"I am going to read a list of present federal government programs. For each, I'd like you to tell me whether you feel it should be expanded, cut back, or kept about the same."								
In favor of expanding military aid to other nations	n.a.*	4%	n.a.	5%	n.a.	5%	n.a.	3%
In favor of keeping military aid the same	n.a.	27	n.a.	22	n.a.	21	n.a.	20
In favor of cutting back military aid to other nations	n.a.	62	n.a.	65	n.a.	64	n.a.	70
"On the whole, do you favor or oppose our giving military aid to other nations? By military aid I mean arms and equipment, but not troops."								
In favor	**33**	**33**	**73**	**28**	**59**	**29**	**60**	**22**
"On the whole, do you favor or oppose our government selling military equipment to other nations?"								
In favor	29	37	n.a.	39	68	33	67	35
"Do you feel that U.S. military aid to Central America is likely to lead to U.S. military involvement in that area?"								
% answering yes	**n.a.**	**72**	**50**	**n.a.**	**n.a.**	**n.a.**	**n.a.**	**n.a.**
"Do you think that U.S. military aid and arms sales to Israel should be increased, decreased, stopped altogether or kept about the same."								
Increased	8	10	5	9	5	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Decreased	16	10	20	17	22	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Stopped altogether	25	11	2	16	3	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Kept about the same	42	57	71	47	66	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Don't know	9	12	2	11	4	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.

*n.a. = not asked

tary aid to rebel groups fighting their Communist-supported governments in places like Nicaragua (see Table IV-3). And only one out of ten Americans thought that military aid and arms sales to Israel ought to be increased. In the four years 1982-86, however, the proportion of those who want to see such aid decreased or stopped altogether declined, from 33% to 21%, while those who want to see it kept at the same level increased 10%, reaching 57%. The leaders were more in favor of maintaining present levels of military aid to Israel than the general public, and were even less inclined than they to see it increased. The January 1987 poll, however, revealed a drop in public support for military aid to Israel.

SUMMARY

In sum, the Reagan Doctrine finds little support among the American people. A traditional lack of enthusiasm for economic aid, a positive dislike for military aid, and a substantial concern that the latter will only get us militarily involved in Central America add up to a limited support for the President's policy. Further, the notion of "interdependence" between our domestic economy and our foreign policy took something of a beating in the period 1982-86 as the American people gave diminished priority to economic issues in general.

V. U.S. Military Involvement

ATTITUDES ON DEFENSE SPENDING

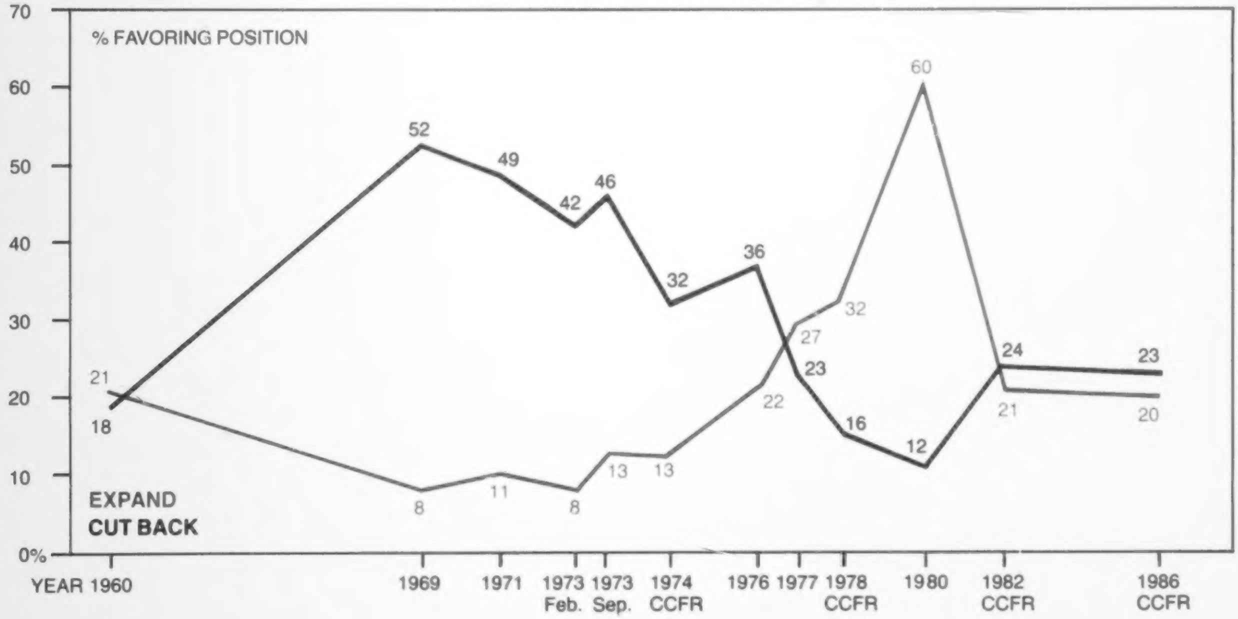
One of the most important shifts in public attitude has been over levels of defense spending. Since the early 1980s, there has been a clear movement away from previous substantial support for increased spending in this area. This represents a significant reversal of the trend of the later 1970s. During the period 1974 to 1978, there was a 19% shift in favor of increased defense spending, from 13% to 32%, and a related decline in those who favored cutting back on defense, from 32% to 16%. Other polls indicated that the two years following the 1978 Council survey witnessed an even stronger surge in support for accelerated defense spending. A majority of the public held this view in 1980-81, then shifted back to support for the status quo.

In the years 1982 to 1986, public opinion became more stable on this issue. There has been no detectable shift back toward support for the expansion of defense spending along the lines consistently advocated by the Reagan administration. On the other hand, opposition to defense also has not increased; there is only limited support for cutting defense spending. Rather, there has been very slight movement from both the "expand" and "cutback" categories toward support for keeping the status quo. Between 1982 and 1986, those who opted for "keep same" level went from 52% to 54%. The decline in support for increasing defense spending is demonstrated in Figure V-1.

Leadership opinion appears to have moved in the same direction, but with more support for cutting spending. In 1986, only 12% of this group wanted to increase defense spending, compared with 20% in 1982 and 31% in 1978; and 37% wanted to cut back, compared with 41% in 1982 and 28% 1978. As with the general public, sentiment on both sides moved toward the middle, with a 12% expansion, from 36% to 48%, of those who wished to "keep the same" levels of defense spending.

In 1986 as in earlier surveys, attitudes toward defense spending were measured in two ways. First, respondents were asked whether a series of present federal government programs should be "expanded, cut back, or kept about the same." In this context, defense spending was being compared with various domestic programs, including such popular ones as aid to education and Social Security. When queried in this way, 22% of the public favored expanding defense spending and 34% wanted to cut back, compared with 24% and 34% respectively in these categories in 1982. A total of 39% of the public wanted to keep defense spending at current levels, compared with 36% in 1982.

FIGURE V-1
PUBLIC SENTIMENT ON DEFENSE SPENDING



Second, the defense spending question was asked separately, with no implied trade-offs involved. As in earlier surveys in this series, defense spending was less popular in the context of implied trade-offs against other government programs. The trends concerning both questions are nevertheless the same over time: Council polls after 1978 showed a drop in support for increasing, a gain in support for cutting back, and a gain in support for maintaining the status quo concerning levels of defense spending.

Figure V-1 provides long-term trend indications concerning public attitudes on this issue. With the passage of time, the peak in the early 1980s measured by Council and other surveys in support for defense spending stands out with increasing clarity. This shift toward more defense spending was greater than the previous one in this direction measured by Gallup, in the late 1950s, and is the most significant such shift on this subject found by the organization in polls going back to the late 1940s. Despite the movement away from the 1978 level, public opinion is still comparatively sympathetic to defense spending. Support for cutting back defense is somewhat greater than was the case in 1960, but about the same proportions want to expand now as in that year, and this percentage is higher than has been the case in most intervening years.

In contrast to earlier years, attentiveness to news and belief that the Soviet Union is stronger than the United States do not correlate strongly with attitudes on defense spending. In 1978 there was a strong relationship between each of these categories and defense spending–the more attentive public, and those who felt the Soviet Union was clearly superior to the United States, were much more positive about defense. Moreover, at that time there were far more people who believed that the Soviet Union was superior to the United States. In the intervening period there has been clear movement of opinion toward the view that the two superpowers are about equal in military capabilities. No doubt this is one important factor in the waning of support for greater defense spending. In 1982 there was much less difference between the attentive public and the rest, and this carried through in the 1986 survey as well. Among those highly attentive to foreign news, 22% wanted to expand defense spending, while 19% of those low on the attentiveness scale wanted to do so. Concerning the strength of the Soviet Union, the association between the view that the Soviet Union is stronger and support for greater defense spending apparent in 1982 had declined by 1986. (See Table V-I.)

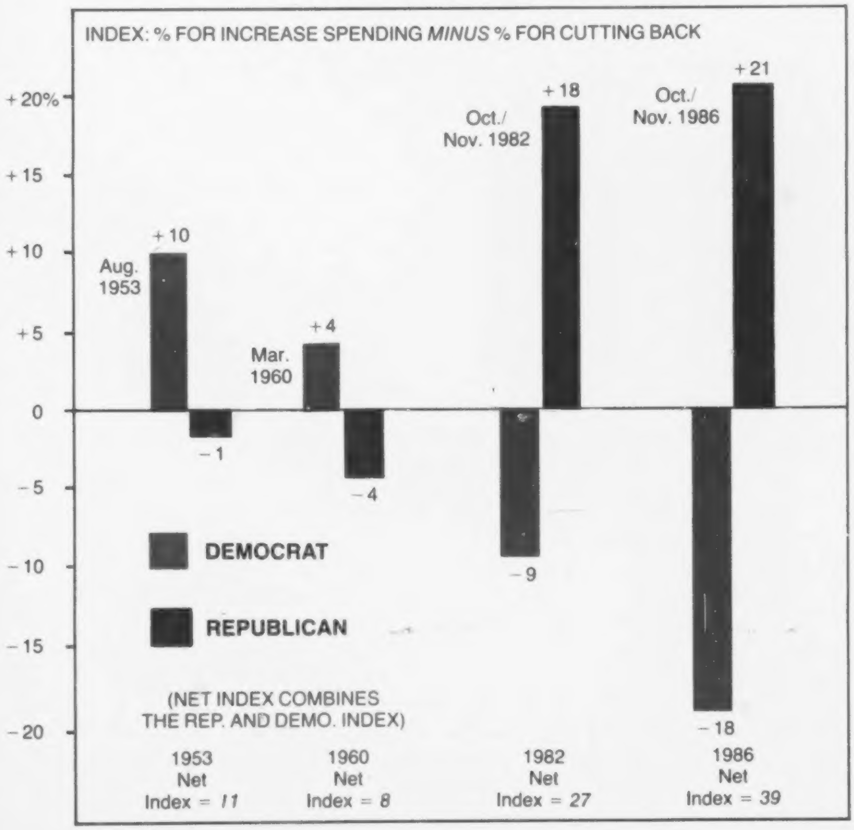
As this implies, decline in net advocacy of defense spending has been paralleled by a change in the perception of the military balance between the two superpowers. From the previous survey to the 1986 one, there was a decline of 12 points in the percentage of people who believe that the Soviet Union is stronger than the United States, from 29% to 17%, and an increase of 7 points in the proportion who believe that the United States is stronger, from 21% to 28%. While a plurality of 48% believe that the two superpowers are about equal, for the first time there is a significantly greater number of people who see the United States as the stronger superpower.

Among the leaders, there is a stronger tendency to see the two nations as being on a par in military terms, and also a more strongly held perception that the United States has the edge. The proportion viewing the U.S. as stronger (28%) is two and one-half times as large as that which sees the Soviets as stronger (11%). The large majority of the leaders who believe that the two superpowers are approximately equal in power should be kept in mind in analyzing a wide range of foreign policy responses. Concern about the federal deficit is probably another factor affecting the views in defense spending, especially among leaders.

As noted elsewhere in this report, advocates of increased defense spending join others in supporting cooperative ventures with the Soviet Union. These include arms control agreements as well as civilian endeavors. (See Table V-2.)

Partisanship plays a significant role in opinion on defense. This perhaps reflects the clearcut views of President Reagan on this subject, and is almost certainly influenced by the increasingly consistent attitudes within, and sharp differences between, American political parties on defense issues. A total of 29% of the Republicans but only 14% of the Democrats were in favor of expanding defense spending; 32% of the Democrats but only 8% of the Republicans were in favor of cutting back.

FIGURE V-2
SUPPORT FOR DEFENSE SPENDING
BY PARTY: EISENHOWER AND REAGAN YEARS



Over the years there has been a strong long-term correlation between partisanship and defense spending, but not always in the same direction. Party sentiments on defense spending measured by the Gallup organization during the Eisenhower administration, another period when a Republican president held strong public views on military spending, was the reverse of the present: the Democrats advocated greater spending, the Republicans wanted less. (See Figure V-2.)

In recent years the association between party and defense views has become even stronger. Subtracting the percentage in a party advocating cutting back from the percentage advocating expansion yields a useful index number (e.g., 29% Republicans for expanding minus the 8% Republicans for cutting back results in a +21% Republican index). By this index, the gap between the parties has expanded even as defense spending has tended to increase more slowly. In 1982 the gap between the parties was 27% (+18% Republicans and −9% Democrats); in 1986, the gap had grown to 39% (+21% Republican and −18% Democrats). The principal change over the years 1982-86 was the striking increase in the number of Democrats who want to cut back on defense.

Table V-1. Sentiments on defense spending by view of Soviet power 1982 and 1986

Defense:	Stronger Military Power:					
	United States			Soviet Union		
	Leaders	Public		Leaders	Public	
	1986	1986	1982	1986	1986	1982
Expand	5%	23%	20%	34%	31%	37%
Keep same	46	55	54	55	53	48
Cut back	49	22	26	11	16	15

Table V-2. Defense spending and U.S.-Soviet cooperation, 1986

Policies toward Soviets:	Percent favoring policy among those who want to expand defense: Public	Leaders
1. Favor arms agreements	82%	84%
2. Resume cultural and educational exchanges	76	95
3. Increase/expand grain sales	53	70
4. Favor scientific exchange	50	66
5. Oppose trade restrictions	47	53
6. Share technical information on missile defense	22	n.a.
7. Favor joint efforts to solve energy problems	n.a.*	60
8. Limit sale of advanced U.S. computers	64	85

*n.a. = not asked

FIGURE V-3: LEADERS - 1986
DEFENSE SPENDING

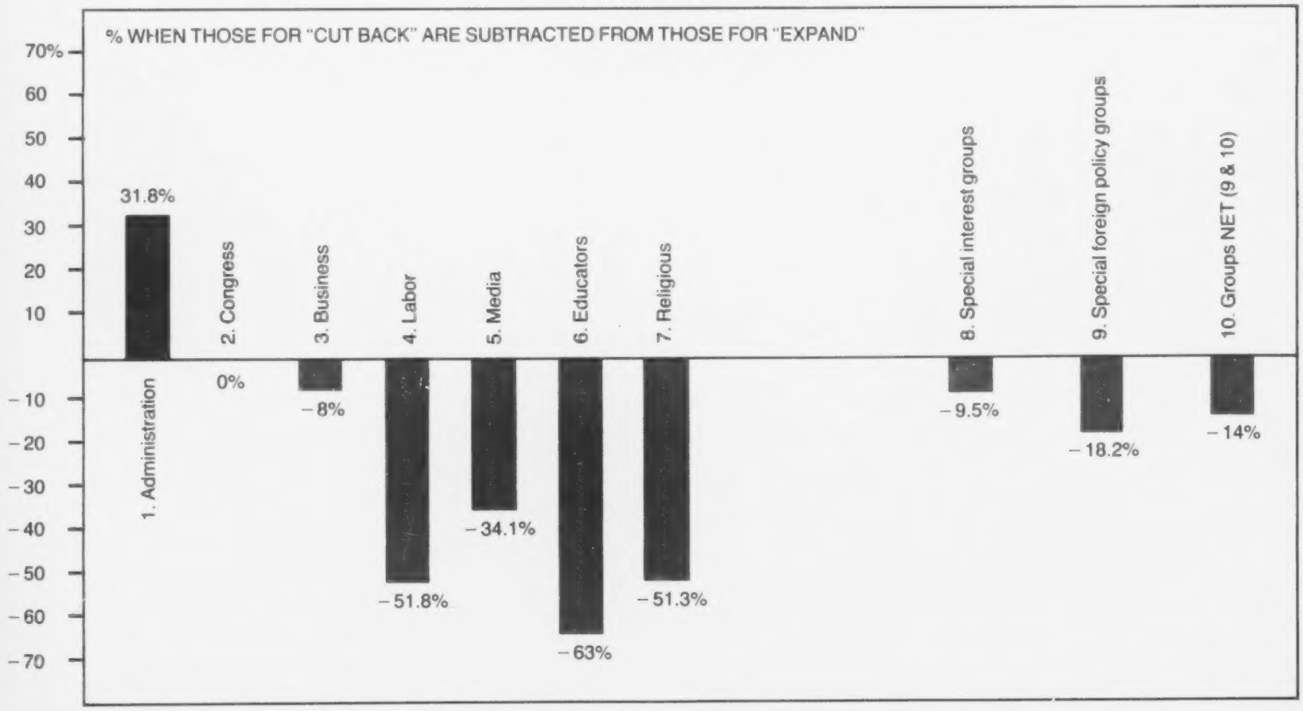


Table V-3. Attitudes on use of U.S. troops overseas: 1986

	U.S. Response:					
	Favor Sending Troops		Oppose Sending Troops		Don't Know	
Situation:	**Public**	**Leaders**	**Public**	**Leaders**	**Public**	**Leaders**
1. Soviets invade Western Europe	68%	93%	24%	5%	8%	2%
2. Soviets invade Japan	53	82	36	12	11	6
3. Nicaragua allows Soviets to set up missile base	45	67	42	27	13	6
4. Arabs cut off oil to U.S.	36	n.a.*	51	n.a.	13	n.a.
5. Arabs invade Israel	33	57	54	38	14	5
6. Soviets invade China	27	14	61	78	12	8
7. Iran invades Saudi Arabia	26	n.a.	59	n.a.	15	n.a.
8. El Salvador government losing to Leftist rebels	25	n.a.	56	n.a.	19	n.a.
9. Nicaragua invades Honduras to destroy Contra bases	24	17	60	74	17	9
10. North Korea invades South Korea	24	64	64	32	12	4
11. China invades Taiwan	19	n.a.	64	n.a.	17	n.a.

*n.a. = not asked

Finally, both education and declared position on the liberal–conservative political spectrum had a bearing on attitudes about defense spending. The more formal education, the less the support for increasing defense spending and the greater support for cutting back. As party sentiments imply, self-described conservatives are more in favor of defense spending than self-described liberals. Among the leaders, union and religious representatives and educators were particularly anxious to cut back defense spending. However, virtually no other category of leaders reflected the administration's strong sentiments for increased defense spending. (See Figure V-3.)

Both public and leaders are clearly supportive of research on, though not necessarily deployment of, the Strategic Defense Initiative – the so-called "Star Wars" program. A total of 48% of the public and 66% of the leaders support research but no decision on deployment at this time. Only 14% of each group would abandon the effort, while 28% of the public and 20% of the leaders favor building the system.

INTERVENTION

In 1986 Americans were somewhat more willing to use troops overseas in selected circumstances, reflecting perhaps a waning of the influence of the Vietnam experience. At the same time, the public is still considerably more reluctant than the leaders to use troops. A clear majority of the public sample favors commitment of American troops to combat only in the event of a direct Soviet invasion of Western Europe or Japan. Leaders are much more willing to consider using troops in other circumstances, including a Soviet invasion of South Korea or a cutoff of oil supplies. Among the public, 68% were willing to use troops if the Soviets invade Western Europe and 53% if they invade Japan. Slightly under half (45%) of the public and two-thirds of the leaders would commit troops if the Nicaraguan government permitted the Soviet Union to build a missile base on their territory (45% in favor, 42% opposed). In all other situations cited in the public sample, a clear majority was opposed to use of American troops.

Feelings appear to be the same concerning the Asian nations cited. A total of 64% of the public sample opposed use of troops if China were to invade Taiwan *or* if North Korea were to invade South Korea; 61% were opposed if the Soviet Union invaded the People's Republic of China. While the trend continued toward greater willingness to use U.S. troops in certain situations, notably to defend close allies in Europe and Japan, the public remains strongly opposed to becoming directly engaged in military action elsewhere (see Table V-3).

The even division of opinion concerning use of troops in the event the Soviets place a missile base in Nicaragua contrasts with the general reluctance to become involved in Central America. This situation roughly parallels the Soviet attempt to move offensive missiles surreptitiously into Cuba in 1962. It resulted in direct military confrontation between the two superpowers. At the time, U.S. public opinion was extremely supportive of President Kennedy's decision to impose a naval blockade around Cuba and his demand that the missiles be removed. Such a move today, with the size and diversity of the nuclear arsenals on both sides, would not shift the strategic balance. The sentiments expressed about Nicaragua are conflicting (see Table V-3).

People are generally opposed to using troops overseas, yet strategic concerns are important and the U.S. has strong historic involvement and influence in Latin America. In contrast to defense of Europe and Japan, a decisive majority is not for using force if the Soviets set up a missile base in Nicaragua. A plurality, however, did favor that course. But 60% of the public were opposed to using troops if Nicaragua invaded Honduras to destroy contra bases. The even division of opinion reflects the tension between aversion to use of troops and support for a national policy, dating back to the early 1960s, that offensive Soviet missiles in Central America or the Caribbean are unacceptable.

Leadership opinion is much more supportive of use of military force in selected

Table V-4. Willingness to use troops and Vietnam War attitudes

"The Vietnam War... fundamentally wrong and immoral."

	Agree Strongly		Disagree Strongly	
Use Troops if:	**Public**	**Leaders**	**Public**	**Leaders**
Soviets Invade Japan	50%	69%	68%	89%
Soviets Invade W. Europe	**65**	**84**	**82**	**96**
Soviet Missiles in Nicaragua	40	43	69	86
N. Korea Invades S. Korea	**21**	**43**	**46**	**80**
Rebels Winning in El Salvador	20	n.a.*	47	n.a.
Arabs Invade Israel	**28**	**55**	**51**	**57**

*n.a. = not asked

circumstances. As with the public, sentiment is strongest concerning defense of Western Europe and Japan. This is followed by strong support for using the military against a Soviet missile base in Nicaragua, by 67% to 27%. Leadership opinion is strongly in favor also of defending Israel against an Arab military invasion, by 57% to 38%. Leaders by a two-to-one majority would defend South Korea against North Korea, in contrast to the four-to-one majority against using troops in the event that the Soviet Union invaded China.

There is a further division between public and leaders on the question of the Reagan Doctrine, giving economic and military assistance to "rebel groups fighting their Communist-supported governments" in such countries as Afghanistan, Angola, and Nicaragua. A total of 42% of the public were against any aid, while only 20% of the leaders felt that way. By contrast, 46% of the leaders, but only 22% of the public, favored giving both military and economic help to such rebels. This is consistent with responses to the more general question on foreign military aid—a clear majority of the public was opposed but three-quarters of the leaders were in favor.

In an effort to test willingness to intervene on the problems of terrorism and the drug traffic, the public and leaders were presented with the choices of negotiating with terrorist groups "to try to solve the problems they're concerned with," ordering the CIA to assassinate known terrorists, and using military force against terrorists or nations that harbor them. Majorities of 54% of the public and 68% of the leaders favored use of military force; but assassination was rejected by both the public—48% to 40%—and leaders—65% to 28%. Negotiation was opposed by 55% of the public and 74% of the leaders. Concerning drugs, large majorities of the public (82%) and of the leaders (81%) favor using military and civilian personnel to help foreign governments, and 60% and 79% respectively would aid farmers to move into different crops. However, direct use of military force was rejected by 67% of the public and 91% of the leaders. Use of force to stop the drug trade is the one topic polled for which women were as willing as men to use military force. On this question, 27% of both males and females surveyed said the U.S. should use force. By contrast, when asked about committing troops overseas in response to hypothetical events, men were consistently more willing to do so than women. For instance, 75% of men but 62% of women were willing to use troops if the Soviets invaded Western Europe; and respective figures were 63% and 44% if the Soviets invaded Japan, 52% and 39% if the Soviets placed missiles in Nicaragua, and 32% and 17% if North Korea invaded South Korea.

VIEWS ON VIETNAM

American attitudes concerning the Vietnam War remained generally negative. In the 1986 survey, as before, respondents were asked how they felt about the statement that the Vietnam War "was more than a mistake; it was fundamentally wrong and immoral." In 1986, 66% of the public concurred, compared with 72% in 1978 and 1982. A total of 27% disagreed "somewhat" or "strongly" with the statement, compared with 21% in 1982 and 19% in 1978. Among leaders, only 44% agreed with the statement, compared with 45% in 1982 and 50% in 1978. A total of 57% disagreed with the statement, compared with 54% in 1982 and 47% in 1978. We can infer some waning of the impact of the Vietnam experience with the passage of time. Majorities of the public, however, have consistently seen the war as a fundamentally misguided effort. Views on Vietnam clearly correlate with willingness to use troops overseas, as Table V-4 reveals.

NATO

Recent years have witnessed growing frictions between the United States and European allies, especially on trade and financial and fiscal matters. European criticism has extended to security questions as well. For example, there was strong opposition in Europe, especially in the Low Countries and among Socialist parties, to the deployment of 572 Cruise and Pershing II missiles under the 1979 NATO "two-track" decision. There has also been extensive political criticism of the U.S. Strategic Defense Initiative. Most European leaders were surprised by and disagreed with President Reagan's proposal at the Iceland summit to abolish all ballistic missiles, a proposal that if implemented could undermine the NATO security system of the past four decades. These difficulties, however, do not appear to have resulted in any movement on the part of U.S. opinion away from the NATO alliance or from commitment to the defense of Europe. When asked about maintaining, increasing, or decreasing the U.S. commitment to NATO, 62% of the public and 77% of the leaders wanted to continue the involvement at current levels.

SUMMARY

In conclusion, defense issues do not seem to provoke the same concerns apparent in earlier years. Both the public and leadership groups are more confident about the strength of the United States, measured by views on defense spending and also such matters as the role of the nation in the world. As noted in Chapter II, the majority was more confident than four years ago that the U.S. was playing a more important role. The shift has been even sharper among leaders, and people are more willing to use U.S. troops overseas in certain selected circumstances. Attitudes on defense spending, use of force, and national strength all have moved in a consistent direction in recent years.

VI. Foreign Policy Preference: Leaders, Public, and Administration

Public opinion plays an important part in democratic theory. To be sure, theorists disagree about what the public's role ought to be, especially when it comes to foreign policy. Some advocate populistic democracy, in which government policy responds directly to what a majority of citizens wants. Others argue that enlightened leadership ought to promote what it sees as the public interest, even if that means carrying out policies that are (at least in the short run) unpopular with the public. Still others emphasize the importance of leaders educating and informing ordinary citizens so that public opinion rests upon a solid foundation and the preferences of leaders and citizens do not conflict.

No position need be taken on these controversies in order to ascertain how leaders and the public actually perceive U.S. foreign policy. The Council's surveys, with their separate samples of public and leadership opinion, shed some light on certain aspects of these questions.

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN PUBLIC OPINION AND REAGAN ADMINISTRATION POLICIES

It is relevant to explore to what extent U.S. foreign policy corresponds to the wishes of the citizenry or the leaders. At various points in this report we have noted apparent discrepancies between current foreign policy and the preferences of the public. It is difficult to be precise about the extent of such discrepancies, but they are clearly frequent enough and important enough to establish that U.S. foreign policy does not proceed purely and simply on the basis of populistic democracy. For better or worse, the government does not always do what a majority of the public wants, nor does the public always approve of what the government does.

Discrepancies between government policy and the preferences of the public are not unique to the Reagan administration, of course. Under all administrations covering the years of the four Council surveys, the public gave a higher priority to domestic spending in which the public benefitted directly—whether it concerned support for education, housing, Social Security, or protecting jobs of American workers. On some foreign policy issues like foreign aid, the use of U.S. troops abroad, or tariffs, differences have existed under many different administrations, Republican and Democratic alike, reflecting the generally lower levels of foreign policy activism among the general public than among political and governmental leaders. On other issues in 1982 and 1986, and especially on Central America, arms control, and relations with the Soviet Union, the public clearly differed from the foreign policies pursued by the Reagan administration. (See the data summarized in Table VI-1. In the Table the percentages are recalculated, excluding

FIGURE VI-1. DIFFERENT LEADERSHIP GROUPS' RATINGS OF THE REAGAN ADMINISTRATION'S OVERALL FOREIGN POLICY - 1986

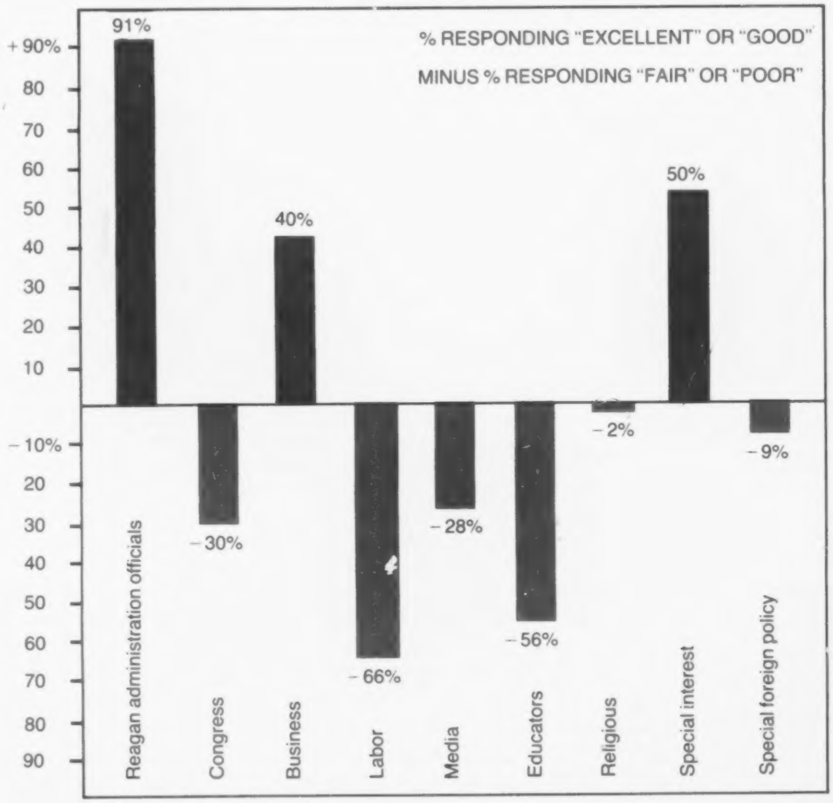


Table VI-1. Apparent disagreements betwen the public and the Reagan administration – 1986

(Proportion of the public giving each response. Percentages are recalculated, excluding "don't knows" from the base)			
Domestic Priorities			
Education spending			
Expand 71%	Keep the same 26%	Cut back 4%	
Social Security spending			
Expand 62%	Keep the same 33%	Cut back 5%	
Goal of protecting jobs of American workers			
Very important 79%	Somewhat important 18%	Not important 3%	
Tariffs			
Eliminate tariffs 34%	Tariffs are necessary 66%		
Administration handling of trade			
Excellent or good 29%	Fair or poor 71%		
Administration handling of illegal immigration			
Excellent or good 20%	Fair or poor 80%		
Military Spending			
Defense spending (asked in context of domestic spending)			
Expand 23%	Keep the same 41%	Cut back 35%	
Spending on national defense (asked later in questionnaire)			
Expand 21%	Keep the same 56%	Cut back 23%	
Military strength			
U.S. stronger 30%	About equal 52%	Soviet Union stronger 18%	
Arms Control			
Mutual verifiable nuclear freeze			
Favor right now, if Soviets agree 73%	Only after U.S. builds up nuclear weapons more 15%	Not at all 12%	
Goal of wordlwide arms control			
Very important 71%	Somewhat important 23%	Not important 6%	
Foreign Military Aid			
Giving military aid			
Favor 36%	Oppose 64%		
Selling arms and equipment			
Favor 41%	Oppose 59%		
Aid to rebels against Communist-supported governments			
Favor economic and military aid 24%	Economic only 30%	None 46%	
Central America			
Administration's handling of Nicaragua			
Excellent or good 25%	Fair or poor 75%		
If Nicaragua invaded Honduras			
Favor using U.S. troops 29%	Oppose 71%		
Is military aid to Central America likely to lead to U.S. military involvement?			
Yes 80%	No 20%		
Administration handling of human rights			
Excellent or good 45%	Fair or poor 55%		
Terrorism			
Negotiate with terrorists			
Yes 41%	No 59%		
Administration's handling of terrorism			
Excellent or good 45%	Fair or poor 55%		
Middle East			
Military aid to Israel			
Increase 11%	Keep the same 64%	Decrease 12%	Stop 13%
Plan for Palestinian homeland on West Bank			
Favor 68%	Oppose 32%		
Administration's handling of the Middle East			
Excellent or good 44%	Fair or poor 56%		

"don't know" responses, in order to highlight the balance of opinion among members of the public with opinions.)

Once again the American public is much more eager than the administration in power to expand certain domestic social welfare programs than military spending. Large majorities in 1986 wanted to expand spending on education (71%, vs. only 4% for cutbacks) and on Social Security (62% vs. 5%). Similarly, the public again put a high priority on protecting the jobs of American workers as a foreign policy goal.

While the Reagan administration proposed to continue its military build-up, few members of the public (no more than 23%) wanted to expand military spending; more wanted to cut it back, and the preponderance of opinion favored keeping it about the same. Most Americans did not believe in a degree of Soviet military strength that would require a further U.S. build-up. Despite a decade of rhetoric about Soviet military superiority, only 18% saw the USSR as militarily stronger than the U.S., while 30% thought the U.S. was stronger and most considered the two nations about equal. That Americans were more skeptical of the Soviet superiority argument than they had been in 1982 can be seen partly as reflecting an accomplishment of the Reagan military build-up.

After the Reykjavik summit meeting, where President Reagan proposed drastic cutbacks in nuclear weapons, it became especially difficult to ascertain exactly what the administration's arms control policies were. In proposing the abolition of offensive ballistic missiles, the President undoubtedly appealed to the widespread public desire to reduce and possibly eliminate the deployment of thousands of nuclear-armed missiles. His proposal, which, if implemented, would discard the NATO defense system of the past 40 years, left the European allies dismayed – and left many American experts, government officials, and Congressional leaders equally skeptical. Nevertheless, the President's proposal had some public relations value and went far in the direction of meeting the public's long-held goal of worldwide arms control. The failure of the administration to achieve actual arms control agreements during its first six years left much of the public disappointed, according to the preferences reflected in our 1986 survey.

The Reagan Doctrine of supporting rebels against communist-supported governments like those in Nicaragua, Angola, and Afghanistan was favored by only a quarter of the population (24%). Many supported economic aid only, and nearly half opposed all such aid. Thus one of the cornerstones of Reagan administration policy in the Third World was opposed by most of the public. The public's opposition to military aid and covert action was most marked with respect to Central America. Nicaragua was specifically mentioned in our question about the Reagan Doctrine, which elicited little support. Moreover, three-quarters of the public gave unfavorable ratings to the administration's handling of Nicaragua, and even more (80%) thought military aid to Central America was likely to lead to U.S. military involvement. Few (29%) favored use of U.S. troops if Nicaragua invaded Honduras.

On the subject of terrorism the public's preferences corresponded closely to stated administration policies as of October 1986. Majorities favored using force against terrorist nations or groups even if innocent people might be killed (62%) and opposed negotiating with terrorists (59%). But that opposition to negotiations, together with the strong public distaste for Iran and for the Ayotollah Khomeini, came back to haunt President Reagan when it was revealed shortly after the autumn 1986 survey that the administration had in fact been negotiating with and selling arms to Iran. This particular discrepancy between public preferences and administration policy, compounded by the widely held perception that the policy had been misrepresented to the public, caused a decline in support for the Reagan administration's foreign policy.

Although sharp differences of view persist between the public and the administration, there are indications of movement by the Reagan administration in the direction of a more cooperative relationship with the Soviet Union, toward greater efforts on arms control, and toward slowing the rate of increase in military spending.

GAPS BETWEEN THE PUBLIC AND FOREIGN POLICY LEADERS

In addition to identifying differences between the public and the administration, it is useful to review the gaps between the policy preferences of the general public and those of our sample of leaders, and also to look at differences among the leaders themselves. Once again, we found many differences in policy preferences between the public and foreign policy leaders. (The largest gaps are displayed in Table VI-2. In order to compare the balance of opinion within the two groups, "don't know" responses, which are more numerous among the public, are excluded and the percentages recalculated.)

As we have noted before, there is a substantial (28%) gap in the proportions favoring an active part for the U.S. in world affairs. For decades, leaders have expressed more internationalist views than the public. The gap, however, is not enormous; and a majority of the public supports an active foreign policy.

The greater internationalism of leaders shows up in many specific areas of policy, notably in attitudes concerning military and economic foreign aid, free trade, various kinds of military intervention abroad, and cooperative relationships with the Soviet Union.

The general public is much more concerned than foreign policy leaders with domestic economic matters that affect the U.S. work force. Thirty-five percent more thought tariffs are necessary; and 35% more also considered the goal of protecting Americans' jobs to be very important. By the same token, the public is considerably less enthusiastic about spending money abroad. Despite the large majority endorsement of the goal of combatting world hunger, foreign economic aid was favored by many more (33%) of the leaders than of the public. (To be sure, a majority of the public having opinions did support economic aid.)

The public attributed more importance than did leaders to the goal of "containing communism," but were less inclined to see a threat if communist governments come to power in specific countries. The leaders gave a higher priority to the aim of defend-

Table VI-2. Gaps in policy preference between foreign policy leaders and the public – 1986

	("don't knows" excluded)		
	Public (% holding opinion)	Leaders (% holding opinion)	Gap (% leaders minus % public)
Involvement abroad			
Best to take an active part in world affairs	71%	99%	+28
Domestic economy			
Tariffs are necessary	66%	31%	−35
Goal of protecting Americans' jobs "very important"	79%	44%	−35
Use of military force			
Favor using U.S. troops if:			
North Korea invaded S. Korea	28%	67%	+39
USSR invaded Japan	60%	87%	+27
Arabs invaded Israel	38%	60%	+22
Vietnam war was not wrong or immoral	29%	57%	+28
Foreign military aid			
Favor military aid to other nations	36%	78%	+42
Favor military and economic aid to rebels against Communist-supported governments	24%	52%	+28
Believe U.S. military aid to Central America is not likely to lead to U.S. military involvement	20%	52%	+32
Foreign Economic aid			
Favor aid for economic development and technical assistance	60%	93%	+33
United Nations			
Goal of strengthening UN "very important"	49%	23%	−26
Relations with the Soviet Union			
Favor exchanging scientists	59%	86%	+27
Drugs			
Favor use of military force without countries' permission	29%	7%	−22

ing allies' security. In most concrete cases the public is substantially more reluctant than the leaders to use U.S. troops abroad. This is most notable with respect to a hypothetical invasion of South Korea by North Korea (39% fewer of the public than of leaders would use U.S. troops). But a similar gap appears in the cases of a Soviet invasion of Japan (28%); an Arab invasion of Israel (22%); a Soviet invasion of Europe (21%–though a large majority of the public still favored using U.S. troops); and a Soviet missile base in Nicaragua. In only two cases did the public express more willingness than leaders to use troops – a hypothetical invasions of China by the USSR or of Honduras by Nicaragua.

One large and important difference concerning the use of American troops was the public's much more pervasive belief (28%) that the Vietnam War was "fundamentally wrong and immoral," not just a mistake. Also considerably fewer of the public (28%) than of leaders favored Reagan Doctrine military aid to rebels fighting leftist governments in places like Nicaragua, Angola, and Afghanistan.

When it comes to foreign military aid, however, the public was far less supportive than leaders. The largest of all the gaps concerned military aid (42%). One cause of this reluctance to give military aid was undoubtedly the belief–held by 28% more of the public than the leaders–that military aid (to Central America) would tend to lead to U.S. military involvement. This is consistent with the public's opposition even to

Table VI-3. Major differences between opinions of administration officials and other leaders – 1986

	Administration Officials*	Other Leaders*	Gap (% Administration minus % others)
Foreign policy role of Congress			
Congress is too strong	77%	28%	+49
Domestic economy			
Tariffs should be eliminated	100%	67%	+33
Arms Control			
Favor mutual nuclear freeze	40%	82%	−43
Use of military force			
Goal of containing Communism "very important"	86%	40%	+46
Vietnam war was wrong and immoral	5%	45%	−40
Military spending			
Goal of matching Soviet power "very important"	91%	56%	+35
Favor expanding spending on national defense (2nd question)	43%	10%	+33
U.S. is militarily stronger than Soviet Union	9%	30%	−21
Foreign military aid			
Favor military and economic aid to rebels against Communist-supported governments	100%	48%	+52
Europe			
Europe more important than Asia	27%	49%	−22
Would send son or daughter to Europe rather than Asia	56%	76%	−20
The Middle East			
Sympathize more with Israel (than with Arab nations or "don't know")	32%	63%	−31
Central America			
The U.S. efforts to overthrow the leftist government of Nicaragua were "excellent" or "good"	70%	15%	+55
Human rights			
Goal of promoting democratic governments abroad "very important"	55%	27%	+28
Agree that we must support some military dictators because they oppose Communists	82%	60%	+22
Terrorism			
Favor negotiating with terrorists	0%	23%	−23

selling weapons abroad. But the large gap that also existed with respect to economic aid suggests that unwillingness to spend money probably affected attitudes about military aid as well.

As so often in the past, the public (by 26%) remained more supportive of the United Nations than did leaders. Concerning relationships with the Soviet Union, more leaders than members of the public favored such measures as exchanging scientists, increasing grain sales, avoiding restrictions on trade, resuming cultural and educational exchanges, and negotiating arms control agreements. Only on the question of limiting the sale of advanced computers to the Soviets did leaders take a harder line than the public.

Two final policy areas, concerning international terrorism and the importation of drugs to the U.S., present a mixed pattern of gaps between public and leaders. Leaders were more opposed to negotiating with terrorists, and more in favor of using military force, but less eager to assassinate terrorists. Leaders were more favorable to aiding foreign farmers to grow non-drug crops, but less willing to use military force without other countries' permission. In both cases the leaders may have been more committed to strong action but more wary of the ideas of assassination or unauthorized military interventions in presumably friendly countries.

The causes of these various gaps is no doubt varied. Some differences are inherent in the very idea of a sample of national leaders. It is hardly surprising that people whose livelihood involves analyzing or managing foreign affairs or doing international business tend to favor an active U.S. role abroad. Their positions in society differ from those of the average American and their economic interest may vary. Workers more than leaders naturally worry about protecting Americans' jobs. Other differences may result from the leaders' possession of more information and more awareness of measures needed to protect the country's security and its economy.

We have used the term "leaders" as a shorthand way of referring to our sample of public officials and prominent private individuals active in the major professions, many of them with an international involvement. Over the course of our four surveys from 1974 to 1986 very similar patterns of gaps between the public and the leaders have appeared. There have been ups and downs on particular issues, but no general trend toward elimination of the gaps. While sharp influences emerge between leaders and the policies of any administration, generally leaders' views are more likely to be in accord with the government in power than are those of the public. But this is not always true.

And as we will discuss further, the Reagan administration can derive only limited satisfaction from this survey of leaders' opinions because the leaders differed on many major issues with the administration.

A different way of looking at our leadership sample is to think of it as representing people with direct influence upon policy making rather than upon the public. Of course, one cannot be sure about the extent of their influence. But if these leaders do exert influence on foreign policy, the preference gaps between leaders and public might be one reason why American foreign policy may systematically diverge over long periods of time from the preferences of the general public.

OPINION DIFFERENCES BETWEEN ADMINISTRATION OFFICIALS AND OTHER LEADERS

We have observed that on a number of issues the policies of the Reagan administration did not seem to be in harmony with the views of our sample of leaders. One systematic way of getting at this point is to contrast the opinions expressed by administration officials in our survey with the opinions of the other leaders we surveyed, from Congress, business, labor, the media, education, religious organizations, special interest groups, and foreign policy organizations. (Table VI-3 shows the largest opinion gaps between administration officials and other leaders.) These officials were drawn from a broad range of agencies concerned with foreign political, economic, and military policy – not only the White House Office, the National Security Council, and the Departments of State and Defense, but also international offices in the departments of Agriculture, Commerce, Energy, and Treasury, the Office of Management and Budget and the Office of the United States Trade Representative, and other agencies. Although the sample is small there is no particular reason to think they are unrepresentative of Reagan administration foreign policy officials generally. Moreover, we have restricted Table VI-3 to cases of large opinion differences, on the order of 20 percentage points and more, in order to reduce the chance that differences result from chance characteristics of the particular officials sampled.

What is striking is the number of very large differences amounting to 30, 40, and even 50 percentage points. In many cases administration officials expressed quite different opinions from other leaders, sometimes concerning the overall direction policy should take. The non-administration leaders expressed more concern about the domestic economy and more receptiveness to protective tariffs than administration officials did. They also showed more enthusiasm for arms control, particularly for the idea of a mutual, verifiable nuclear freeze right away if the Soviets would agree to it. They were notably less committed than administration officials to the goal of containing communism, and more likely to condemn the Vietnam War as wrong and immoral.

The non-administration leaders were less committed to the goal of matching Soviet power, and less in favor of expanding spending on national defense. They offered less support to the Reagan Doctrine of giving military aid to rebels against communist-supported governments, though most favored at least giving economic aid. And they expressed more concern that military aid in Central America could lead to U.S. mililtary involvement in that area. Concerning relations with the Soviet Union, non-administration leaders were consistently more likely to favor cooperative measures and to oppose restrictions. There are some indications that Reagan administration officials may be less Europe-centered than other leaders, somewhat more attuned to the Arab world (especially Saudi Arabia), and a bit less sympathetic to Israel.

The non-administration leaders' lack of enthusiasm for the Reagan Doctrine and their hesitation about the use of force abroad was particularly pointed with respect to Central America. A bare 15% of them, far fewer than the 70% of administration officials, rated U.S. efforts to overthrow the government of Nicaragua as "excellent" or "good"; the overwhelming majority called them "fair" or "poor."

Of course non-administration leaders also differed among themselves on many of these issues. Some groups of leaders tended to stand closer to the administration than others did. Businessmen and representatives of special interest groups were closest to administration officials on most issues; leaders from organized labor, the media, education, and religious organizations tended to be the farthest. Members of the 99th Congress, which was sitting at the time of the 1986 survey, were usually about average among the non-administration leaders, meaning that they had some very substantial differences from the administration.

These differences among groups of leaders are exemplified by their overall ratings of the administration's handling of foreign policy. Only 44% of non-administration leaders, in contrast to 96% of administration officials, rated the handling of overall foreign policy as "excellent" or "good"; most rated it "fair" or "poor." But leaders from different sectors reacted differently. Clearly administration officials rated themselves highly, with businessmen and special interest groups only a little behind. Labor officials were very negative, and educators, congressmen, and the media a bit less so.

The party affiliations and ideological orientations of leaders play a part in these differences. Labor leaders, for example, tend to be liberal Democrats, and it is not surprising that they often disagreed with a conservative Republican administration, whereas the business leaders were mostly Republican and conservative. But other leaders did not fit a simple pattern. Overall only 36% of the non-administration leaders described themselves as Democrats. Those from the media mostly described themselves as independents, but they were in broad disagreement with the administration officials.

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